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THE NAVY:

ITS PAST AND PRESENT STATE.

In a Series of Letters

BY

REAR-ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, K.C.B.

(AUTHOR OF "THE WAR IN PORTUGAL," "THE WAR IN SYRIA," &c. &c. &c.)

TO

LORD MELVILLE, THE DUKE OF CLARENCE (LORD HIGH ADMIRAL),
LORD ALTHORP, DUKE OF WELLINGTON, SIR JAMES GRAHAM,
EARL MINTO, LORD MELBOURNE,
LORD JOHN RUSSELL, LORD ELLENBOROUGH, LORD PALMERSTON,
SIR ROBERT PEEL, THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES,
&c. &c. &c.

EDITED BY

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM NAPIER, K.C.B.

(MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SWEDISH ACADEMY OF MILITARY SCIENCES,)

AUTHOR OF "THE PENINSULAR WAR," "CONQUEST OF SCINDE,"
&c., &c., &c.

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INTRODUCTION.

THAT England is not in a state of safety from Foreign aggression, must be felt by every reflecting man, notwithstanding the effrontery of Lord Grey's recent assertions in reply to Lord Ellenborough's proposition about the Militia. There is not a man, unaffected by faction, who does not feel that the available Military and Naval means of the country are inadequate to its protection against an invasion. And this is strongly shewn by the common but miserable consolation of repeating—what none really believe—that greater means are not required, because other nations have no wish to war with us. A fine salve this for the consciousness that all internal resources for resisting an attack, have been neglected. France! Russia! America! they are so mild, so meek, so unambitious, so weak, and so forgiving! The first has no memory for Spain, for Waterloo, for Trafalgar! The second has no wish to extend her dominion! The last is so just, so moderate, so virtuously republican and unagressive!

But why is this trashy policy accepted? Because men feel the Financial question to be so terrible that they try

to persuade themselves of the moderation and justice of nations—who they yet know to be neither just nor moderate—rather then face the expense of providing against danger, by placing the country in a just state of dominion as to Naval and Military affairs: yet the most incredible extravagance and waste are permitted to eat out the pith and marrow of warlike England, because the people at large are kept in ignorance of what is passing under their beards.

It is therefore the duty of men not factious, who have the means and the ability to detect the abuses which paralyze the pride and strength of the nation, to lay such abuses bare before the public, and arouse the indignation which is necessary to remedy a system that has brought Englishmen to the humiliation of hiding from themselves the weakness of the hour, instead of bracing their energies to overcome it.

The Duke of Wellington, as might be expected from so great a man, first pointed out that weakness; and in the following letters Admiral Sir Charles Napier has exposed some of the causes of it—causes which are still in unmitigated activity and ought to be repressed. They are letters worthy of all attention, from those who desire the public welfare; and in that view I have undertaken to edit them at the desire of the author, and because it gives me an opportunity of indicating abuses, nearly as injurious, in another public department.

When Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey, I found there

were three public works required. First—The changing of a guard-room at the Government Office into a stable for the horses of officers and other persons, whose duties brought them from a distance to that place. Second—The making a shed for the same purpose near the Government House. Third—The enlargement of the Military Hospital. I had specifications made out, and a contract signed for the two first, and I obtained leave of the Treasury to commence the work, when the Ordnance Board stepped in, and claimed the right of performing, or rather perpetrating, the following jobs. My contract was *three pounds* for the shed, and something under *nine* for the stable. The Ordnance charge for the last, was not very much short of *fifty pounds*, and the work was ill done. The first I would not suffer to proceed, and wrote to the then Master-General, Sir George Murray, that the Ordnance estimate, *twenty-seven pounds*, was so preposterous, I would not be accessory to such public waste. The Hospital was enlarged upon so ill-judged and extravagant a scale, that it only furnished ten additional beds, and cost twelve hundred pounds! Half that sum would have been an extravagant figure!

These items may seem insignificant, but I happened to shew them at the time to a retired engineer officer, who had great experience of Ordnance works, especially in Ireland; and he informed me that the proportion between the necessary cost and the Ordnance cost thus shewn, tallied exactly with his observations of the works perpetrated, I repeat the

word as the only fitting and expressive one, in Ireland. We may well believe that in distant Colonies the Ordnance cormorants do not fare worse than at home, under this system of extravagant expenditure, and the enormous amount of the Ordnance estimates is thus at once accounted for.

Thinking an exposure of these indications of general waste might be of public use, I wrote to Lord Seymour, offering my evidence on the subject. He replied, that he would lay my letter before the Finance Committee, yet I have heard nothing more; but if Ordnance work is always to cost more than five times the money for which private contractors would perform it, the amount of the estimates need not be wondered at.

Sir C. Napier's letters speak with all the force of reason and facts, and the public will not fail, I think, to remark the strained injustice, the stolid official arrogance of Lord John Russell's answer to his remonstrances, and the utter groundlessness of his Lordship's assertion that the late Lord Auckland had been assailed by the Admiral.

W. NAPIER, MAJOR-GENERAL.

PREFACE.

At the conclusion of the war, having little to do, I turned my attention to the state of the Navy, and wrote several letters to Lord Melville, then at the head of the Admiralty, to the Lord High Admiral, and others in authority, under the signature of a Post Captain.

The first subject I turned my attention to, was the evil arising from the slow promotion from Captain to Admiral. At the end of the war, our Admirals were becoming too old, and I foresaw that a long peace would render them totally inefficient, if the system of promotion was not changed.

I proposed, that when an officer came within 100 of the top of this list of Captains, and was fifty years of age, he should be allowed to retire on the list of superannuated Rear-Admirals; and further, that a Captain of fifteen years' standing should be eligible for a Flag, provided he had performed any great service, that entitled him to be selected; I further proposed, that the entries of youngsters should be limited. Had that been attended to in 1816, the lists would have been in a very different state to what they now are.

Flogging round the fleet, and inflicting corporal punishment on petty-officers, I recommended should be discontinued. I also advocated the propriety of paying the seamen abroad, and instead of imprisoning them on board a ship for two or three years, giving them leave to go on shore on all proper occasions.

I have lived to see these recommendations carried out, many years after they were suggested.

When in Parliament, and long before, I recommended the changing the method of payment, from thirteen months in the year to twelve, and increasing the seaman's pay to two pounds per month; this has also been carried out, accompanied by the shortening the allowance of the seaman's grog, which I do trust will turn out beneficial to the service; but the Captain ought to have authority in hard service to make an additional allowance when he judges it necessary.

The system of keeping six months pay in hand, and of paying the men the day before they sail, and sometimes on the day they sail, should be discontinued, and I dare say, after a quarter of a century's consideration, the men will be paid what they have earned, and allowed to spend it before they are ordered to sea: this was tried in the St. Vincent, without any bad consequences.

I am quite ready to admit that, of late years, more attention has been paid to the comfort of the seamen and boys, and their condition is certainly improved, but there still remains much to be done.

No system for manning the Navy has been thought of, and we have nothing left but to fall back on the odious system of impressment.

In 1816 I proposed to Lord Melville a system of registration, which was imperfectly carried out by Sir James Graham in 1830, and improved by a bill brought in by Mr. Sydney Herbert and myself; but it is very far from being perfect. I brought in another bill, obliging every apprentice in the merchant service to serve a certain period in a ship of war, before he could become a registered seaman; but that bill was not taken up by the Admiralty, and was in consequence lost. Its object was to do away the bad feeling that exists against a man-of-war in the minds of most merchant seamen, and to teach the apprentices in their youth the different exercises, so as they might be useful when called out in the event of war. Had that bill passed, we should have had between four and five thousand lads of eighteen years of age every

year, and at the end of three years they would be at liberty to remain, or return to the merchant service, according to the wants of the Navy. This, in my opinion, would have been the first step to do away impressment. These lads, knowing the habits and customs of a man-of-war, would come forward more willingly than the merchant-seamen of the present day, who have a strong feeling against the Navy; that feeling is, I hope, passing away; but it will be a long while before it entirely disappears, and any attempt at impressment will bring it back in a tenfold degree.

The system of register tickets is little attended to by the master and owners of merchant ships. Men are often embarked without tickets, and the Custom House are not sufficiently strict. A few examples would go a great way to check this irregularity, and strict orders ought to be given to ships of war to muster the crew of merchant ships, and report all those who have seamen on board, without their tickets; but even these precautions will be ineffectual, till owners are prohibited giving the men notes for their wages, payable after the ship has sailed. These notes are sold to the Jews for half their value, and the men consider desertion as no crime—quite the contrary, they think they are *doing* the Jew. The ship-owners lose nothing; the sailor leaves his clothes behind, fresh hands are shipped, and no trouble is taken to apprehend the deserter; whereas, if the seaman was paid in money, it would become the interest of the ship-owner to apprehend and punish him if he deserted. What would be said, if the seamen in the Navy were paid by notes, which would not fetch half their value?

The bad management of the Navy, and our wasteful expense in ship building have long attracted my attention, and I have written many letters on the subject, both public and private, to the different authorities, without effect: a few of them I now publish, together with those I have lately written to the present Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Editor of the Times; and I have reason to think my letters have set the official men to

exercise their wits. I had no interested motive in writing the following letters. The service knows well enough when a man puts himself forward to censure the Admiralty, he will inevitably bring down on himself their wrath; while on the other hand, if he shuts his eyes to their follies, and exaggerates any good they do, he gets into favour. I have done what I thought my duty, regardless of frowns and favours, and I hope I have done it with moderation.

CHARLES NAPIER.

ERRATA AND EMENDATIONS.

Page 16 line 31, after words *Captains of the Port*—read, as a note at foot, * *Sir James Graham's bill does not provide for this, and the Custom-House pay little attention to it.*

— 23 line 18, for *in* read *on.*

— 67 line 2, for *no* read *not.*

— 73 line 1, for *last* read *last war.*

— 74 line 27, for *manned* read *rigged.*

— 81 Add to the foot-note at the bottom of page — *The Admiralty have again taken into their own hands these appointments.*

— 83 Add to the foot-note at bottom of page—*The volunteers of the second class, not Masters' Assistants, are suppressed.*

— 108 line 29, after *opportunity* read *of entering.*

— 109 line 12, for *and he* read *and as he.*

— 114 line 9, for *advance* read *audience.*

— 115 line 29, for *although that step has not* read *when that step has.*

— 116 line 15, for *instructions to* read *inspections at.*

— 127 line 14, for *have* read *lose.*

— 182 line 4, for *perfect* read *imperfect.*

— 184 line 6, for *powerful* read *four or five.*

THE NAVY,

ETC.

To the Right Honourable Lord Melville.

My Lord, Though the nation is now in profound peace, and there is every prospect of its continuing so some time, we ought to look forward to war, and to a much more trying naval war than we have as yet encountered. Formerly we had to contend with nations that we believed to be less brave, and that we knew to be less skilful than ourselves; but from the want of discipline in our Navy, and the inattention to the main point, the guns, we have not only taught the Americans to despise us, and given them confidence that will take all our skill and exertion to destroy, but have opened the eyes of other nations, and shewn them that we are not invincible at sea. However distant it may be, we must look forward to a war with that nation, proud of its young Navy, and the glory it has acquired; I say glory, because I look upon beating our ships, though much inferior to them, a great glory in so young a Navy; and the little they suffered in comparison with us is an evident proof of the superiority of their discipline as regards their guns. I do not think the three frigates and the numerous brigs we lost, ought to have taken the American ships, who were much superior to them; but they ought either to have beat them off, or have made them pay much dearer for their victory than they did, and thus have taught them to respect the British flag. It is not my present intention to point out to your Lordship the difference in the constructing, manning, and arming of the American ships, which, however, I believe to be much superior to

ours; I shall confine myself to the state of our Navy, as regards its discipline and promotion.

It is well known to your Lordship, that a young man must serve six years a Midshipman, and be nineteen years of age, before he can possibly obtain the rank of Lieutenant, twenty-one a Commander, and twenty-two before he can be raised to the rank of Post-Captain. These regulations are the best that were ever introduced into the Navy, and effectually prevent young men of interest arriving at command when children, few of whom ever became an ornament to their profession. Few officers, however, arrive, so young as twenty-two, at the rank of Post-Captain; still fewer can have merit sufficient to attain it, or rather can have an opportunity of doing any thing to deserve it at that age; it is therefore, entirely confined to men of interest, and the sons of Commanders-in-Chief on foreign stations. The average time to arrive at the rank of Rear-Admiral hitherto has not been less than nineteen years, and will in future (according to the present system) be considerably more: latterly, the most fortunate of the profession could not obtain that rank till forty-one, and I think I may in future safely take it at forty-five. It cannot be supposed that it requires twenty years' service as Captain, to qualify an officer for a Rear-Admiral; far less can it be argued, that a man's nerves and constitution are strengthened by thirty years' service at sea: on the contrary, I think five years may be fairly added to his life, which will make the most fortunate full fifty in constitution before they can be Rear-Admirals, and at least twelve years more before they can arrive at any great command.

That is the situation that men of interest are placed in: it is not, however, to them that the nation must look up for the honour of its flag; it is to officers who gain their promotion by stepping out of the beaten path, and are marked by their gallant conduct and superior talents throughout the whole Navy. Men of family and interest are not excluded from that class; on the contrary, the more of that description the better for the Navy and the Country.

An officer of merit will have great luck in future, if he is post before thirty; I shall take that, therefore, for the standard age, which will make him fifty-five in years, and sixty in constitution,

before he can be a Rear-Admiral: some will get it sooner, but many much later.

Your Lordship may judge, whether such zeal and energy as is necessary to uphold the glory of the British flag, can be expected from the generality of men of that age. The discipline of the Navy depends, in a great measure, on the officers at the head of the respective fleets; and I have no hesitation in saying, that in the latter years of the war, zeal and energy were nearly extinct in the breasts of the greatest part of the officers and men; the emulation that formerly existed was at an end; and the pride that officers felt in seeing their ships excel others in evolutions had entirely disappeared.

I have heard many officers attribute the falling off of discipline to the length of the war, and the entire disappearance of the enemy, leaving the Navy little or nothing to do; but I am of opinion it proceeded more from the age of the officers not only commanding the fleets, but the ships of the line, with the addition of the latter being tired of the command of a single ship; and I am certain, had the fleets and ships been in the hands of younger men, they would not only have found means of annoying the enemy more than was done, but of preserving the discipline and keeping up the zeal of the Navy.

The Mediterranean fleet, which was under the command of one of the most distinguished officers in the Navy, to look at was the finest I ever saw, but in performing evolutions, far from satisfactory. I speak of it as a fleet, though there is no doubt but there were exceptions. I served in it three years, and I don't believe there was one-fourth of the line of battle ships in that fleet that had been exercised at firing powder and shot (and without that, all other exercise, even with powder, is of little use; for if not accustomed regularly to load their guns, they will know nothing of it; and if powder alone is used in exercise, one half of them will forget to put in their shot in action); and as for firing with precision, they knew nothing about it. Had Lord Exmouth gone to Algiers direct from Toulon, with five ships, and without any previous preparation, the chances are, he would have been beat. I believe the squadron he took there, though fitted out in a hurry, knew more about their guns than ships that had been in commission all the war: they knew they were going to fight, and took pains to qualify themselves: the fleet in the war never expected it, and

never were prepared, and the officers generally were too old to exert themselves without a stimulus. The Government also were not without their share of blame, for allowing so small a proportion of powder and shot for exercise.

It can easily be supposed that, at a certain time of life, officers get wearied of the constant attention necessary to keep their ships in a proper state of discipline; and as they approach their flags, it generally depends on their First Lieutenants, whether ships are in tolerable order or not; and they must be supported by their Captains, otherwise all will go wrong. Whether the generality of First-Lieutenants were bad, or unsupported, I shall not pretend to decide; but it is beyond a doubt, that at the conclusion of the war, more than one half of our ships of the line were in such indifferent order, and so infamously manned, as to render them unequal to contend with a disciplined enemy: they would have beat a French or a Spanish ship, who were worse than themselves; but I will stake my existence, had an American line-of-battle ship fallen in with one half of them, they would have been taken.

The want of discipline proceeds chiefly from the following causes:—First, from a want of sufficient attention to the fleet on the part of the Admirals, arising partly from their age, and partly from their being tired by a twenty-years' fag at the detail necessary to keep ships in order. Secondly, by the old Captains being wearied of the command of a single ship, in addition to many of them being at a very advanced age when arriving at that rank.

I am inclined to think, that these causes might be removed, by altering the system of promotion, and without doing injustice to any class of officers. At present, after a man is made Post, he has nothing to stimulate him to great actions, except being made a Companion of the Bath (their Lordships having thought proper to discontinue the granting of medals): he must be content to plod on his twenty or five-and-twenty years, before he can get a Flag.

I should therefore propose, that a Captain of the Navy, after serving fifteen years, should be eligible for a Flag: that method of promotion should, however, be confined to men of very superior talents and merit, and the only means I can see of preventing it from abuse, is the following:—When an officer has served that time, and has performed a series of gallant services, that he conceives entitle him to a Flag, he ought to demand it of the

Admiralty, who, however, ought not to be the judges, but they should order a Board of distinguished Admirals to examine his claims, and report their opinions, which ought always to be attended to, and the claims of the Officers, together with their decision, should be inserted in the London Gazette, which would not only prevent Officers from making claims on light grounds, but would go a great way to ensure just decisions. That method of promotion would ensure young Admirals, reward extraordinary merit, improve the discipline of the Fleet, and excite Captains to deeds of glory.

The present mode of promotion by seniority ought also to be continued; and some method should be taken to get rid of old men, who only serve to get their Flags, and would be glad of an honourable retirement.

A plan, which I believe is Lord Keith's, appears to me the best that could be adopted. "After an Officer has arrived within "a certain number of the top of the list of Post-Captains, say a "hundred, and was fifty years of age, he ought to be allowed to "retire on the list of superannuated Rear-Admirals; by which "means you would get rid of Officers who were promoted at "an advanced age, and who cannot be supposed to have the same "spirit, and feel the same pride in their profession, that young men "who look forward to be employed as Admirals naturally must." That plan would not drive out of the service energetic men of that age, many of whom there are, but would be an honourable retirement for all those whose health and age rendered them unfit for active employment, and without causing much additional expence to the country. I would also allow Officers to sell their commissions after a certain length of service; that is to say, the Government should pay a certain sum to those who wished to leave it: no zealous Officer would avail himself of that indulgence, and many bad ones would be got rid of at a trifling expence. In addition to the above, all Captains accepting civil situations in the Navy in time of war, such as Commissioners, Pay-Captains, Governors of Hospitals, &c., ought to be taken entirely off the list of Captains, as there are many indolent men who have not even talents to recommend them, get these situations by interest, and remain in them very quietly till they are promoted.

There is another class of men who ought invariably to be passed over. I mean those who have interest enough, and can be em-

ployed if they please, but prefer enjoying themselves on shore, till near the top of the list, then take a ship for a few months, get their Flags, and remain on shore the rest of their lives.

A sincere desire to improve the state of the Navy, and prevent its ruin, the forerunner of the fall of this country, has called forth the present letter; whether it will meet your Lordship's approbation, I know not; but something must be done, and that speedily, or a new war will see our fleets and ships commanded by worn-out old men, and the British flag, which has so long been triumphant, will be disgracefully driven from the seas by the flag of a nation who have all the inclination and all the means to become a great maritime power. It may be said, "*We have beat all other nations under the present system—then why alter it?*" The answer is simply this: "*The list has increased to such an amazing degree, that men will in future be much older when at the head of the fleets than formerly.*" The Americans have opened our eyes too, and have shown us what it is to contend with a well-manned and disciplined enemy.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

A POST CAPTAIN.

Vevay, Switz., Jan. 1st, 1816.

To the same.

My Lord, Although the number of Midshipmen is fixed for each rate, during the war it was in the power of Captains to introduce as many young gentlemen into the service as they thought proper, and bear them either on the ship's books, or in the different classes, which facility led parents to send their children to sea, without ever thinking how they were afterwards to be provided for; many in consequence never were promoted, nor was it in the power of the Admiralty to do it; and at the end of the war they found themselves without any profession, and too far advanced in life to begin another.

Nobody can deny the hardship on those young men, nor can anybody well blame the Board of Admiralty; but they can prevent it in future, by diminishing the number of Midshipmen in the larger ships, which can be done without any inconvenience to

the service, and positively prohibiting the bearing of gentlemen on the ship's books and classes*. Numbers would, in consequence, be excluded from the Navy, which, however, would be less unjust than first allowing them to enter, and then turning them adrift, when too old to embrace another line of life; they would thus be saved from ruin, and become useful members of society in other professions; and the Admiralty would then have in their power to promote all young men after passing their examination, which I consider they have an undoubted right to, and nothing but misbehaviour should prevent it.

The examination ought to be very strict, and ought never to take place until their time is completed. By a late regulation, young gentlemen can be examined touching their knowledge in the theory of navigation, at any period of their service they think proper, and in consequence they study very hard to acquire a sufficient knowledge to pass at the Academy, and before their time is served, more than half have forgot what they learnt†.

They ought also to be masters of one or two languages, but none in particular should be specified, as it would be more advantageous to the service if different ones were learnt.

Particular favour should be shewn in the reports, to those who went through their examinations with *éclat*, and the Admiralty ought to attend to them, by giving them the best appointments.

Your Lordship will observe that I conceive all young men when qualified, should be made Lieutenants as their right; it is no doubt impossible to make them all Captains, nor indeed is it to be wished; but it is a pity to allow the most meritorious to be Lieutenants all their life. Many will be promoted by interest; some first Lieutenants will gain promotion in battle; but others, equally deserving, have nothing to hope for, as, according to the present system, a man may be the best officer in the Navy without the smallest chance of promotion, merit alone being no recommendation.

The selection, and subsequent promotion of first Lieutenants, appears to me the best means of encouraging officers to an energetic performance of their duty. Every Captain in the Navy knows that it requires great talent and activity to make a good first Lieutenant, and they also know how difficult they are to be

* There is now a regulation for the entry of youngsters.

† This is now abolished.

met with. Till of late years Captains were not allowed to choose their own; that indulgence is however now pretty general, but confined to a certain standing much too long.

As most Captains will naturally choose the best first Lieutenants they can find, the confidence placed in them is not likely to be abused, and, in consequence, I would abridge the standing at present required; and at every general promotion, the Commanders-in-Chief of the different fleets should be provided with a certain number of commissions to be given to the first Lieutenants, not beginning by seniority, but with the ships in the highest discipline. The best ordered ships in a fleet are so evident, that I do not think a conscientious Commander-in-Chief could well abuse the trust placed in him.

That method of promotion would not only be an encouragement to the Captains, who would feel the greatest pride in receiving such a decisive mark of approbation, but it would make the situation of first Lieutenant sought after, and create a general spirit of emulation in the breast of every officer in the fleet.

It is evident the system I recommend will take away a great deal of patronage from the First Lord, or rather, it will divide the patronage between men of interest who now engross the whole of it, and deserving officers who are neglected, and first Lieutenants. Instead of saying what they now do—"*What is "the use of my exerting myself. I have no chance of promotion; "I shall be a first Lieutenant till I am grey-headed, then perhaps I "may be promoted by seniority,*" will say—"*I'll fag night and day "to get my ship in a state of discipline, because, if she excels all "others, at the first general promotion I shall be made a Captain.*"

No First Lord of the Admiralty, and no Commander-in-Chief, ever dreamt of promoting a first Lieutenant whose ship was a credit to the Navy, Lord St. Vincent excepted, whom, notwithstanding the severity of his discipline, which he certainly carried too far, I should be well pleased to see twenty years younger. Under him, an officer who had zeal for the service, was sure of being taken by the hand. When a Commander-in-Chief, he was not afraid to speak to the Admiralty, and he would have his recommendations attended to; at present, a Commander-in-Chief can hardly get any officer except his flag Lieutenant promoted. The Admiralty, or rather the First Lord, has too many friends of his own to provide for to attend to merit. I know it is impossible, in a

Government like ours, to avoid attending to demands from men of influence; but I also know, unless merit is rewarded, we will cease to be a conquering Navy.

There is a growing marine on the other side the Atlantic, that will in another war dispute with us the dominion of the seas. We may at first beat them by numbers, but unless we alter our system they will beat us singly; and the maritime nations of Europe will be as glad to assist them in reducing our power at sea, as the Continent to overturn the military sway of France.

Your Lordship will excuse my speaking plain: the state of the Navy requires it, and the safety of the country demands it. There are many naval officers far more capable than myself of handling the subject. All complain, but, as generally the case, what is everybody's business is nobody's, and things go on from year to year without being mended; and I fear, as long as the Board of Admiralty go in and out with the rest of the Ministry, it never will be better. The Board ought to be permanent, which would make it more independent of political intrigues. Constituted as it at present is, what is uppermost in the mind of the First Lord, who has all the patronage, is to provide for his friends; his stay there is uncertain; and he must be an independent man indeed, and possess more love for his country than falls to the lot of men, if he foregoes the advantages, and sets about a reform which he knows will not be followed by his successor.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

A POST CAPTAIN.

Vevay, Switz., March 1, 1816.

To the same.

My Lord, As I believe rewards and punishments to be the only means of keeping up the discipline of the Navy, particularly amongst the seamen, I shall endeavour to point out the best means of increasing the former, which will naturally lead to a diminution of the latter, a thing much to be desired by every officer in the Navy. The present Admiralty have done well in giving half pay to the seamen whose length of services and good

conduct deserved it. It is not only a retaining fee, but it will point out to the lower orders that the Navy is not a bad profession, and that they are always sure of a competency after serving a certain number of years—but the time is too long. Fourteen years is a long while for a man to look forward to, particularly a seaman, the most unthinking man in the world: it ought to be reduced at least to ten*, and British seamen would then see that their services, when no longer wanted, were not forgotten; and it would, in some measure, do away the great injustice of impressment. Something is also wanting to encourage men when serving to do their duty with alacrity, and induce them to aspire to the situation of petty officers, which, from the responsibility attached to it, is oftener shunned than looked after. I would, therefore, throw open more situations to the seamen, and make those already open more lucrative and distinguished. The situation of Master's Mate should be entirely taken from the Midshipmen, and Quarter-Master promoted in that line: the duty would, in general, be better performed by men of that description, and it would not take away from the qualifying Midshipmen for officers.

The Master at Arms, Cook, Rope and Sail Makers, and Armourers situations should be more respectable, and their pay higher—they are at the head of their professions, and can go no farther. The other petty officers are pretty well off with respect to pay, but the method of promotion ought to be entirely changed. If a vacancy should happen in any ship of the fleet, either by death or otherwise, it should invariably be given to the best petty officer of that ship. I don't mean by that to say, that if the Boatswain or other officer die, his Mate should succeed him in the same ship, but the vacancy that takes place ought to be given to him, in whatever ship the Admiralty or Commander-in-Chief may think fit.

Corporal punishment should never be inflicted on petty officers; if they commit a crime that deserves it, they should lose their situation†.

Great attention ought to be paid to the boys, and pains taken to increase and qualify them for seamen, as they generally turn

* Instead of reducing the time, no man now gets a pension till after twenty-one years' service.

† This is now the case.

out well, and are more attached to the service than those who enter at a more advanced age. The confinement that seamen are liable to on board a man of war ought to be entirely discontinued; and their pay, instead of being kept back till the day before they sail, when it is of little or no use, ought to be given when the ships are ready for sea, and several days allowed them to spend it on shore*. It would encourage them to fit out their ships with alacrity, and the fear of their leave being stopped would be a great check on the irregularities incident to the ships coming into port from a long cruize: but nothing but the most urgent necessity should ever induce the Admiralty or a Commander-in-Chief to send a ship to sea until every man had had his turn on shore.

The punishment of flogging round the fleet should be entirely discontinued†. The worst character subjected to that punishment receives commiseration from all seamen, and the feeling uppermost in their minds is disgust at the brutality of officers sentencing him to such a punishment.

There are many other means of improving the state of the seamen, and attaching them to the service, too tedious to mention here, but which ought to occupy the attention of the Sea Lords at the Admiralty; they have now little to do, and their time cannot be better or more profitably employed than in acquainting themselves with, and obviating the causes that render the naval service so much detested by the generality of seamen, insomuch that the only thing they think of is a good opportunity of running away.

There are various opinions about occasionally separating ship's companies. Some officers think they ought not to be too long together. I am of opinion, and I know it from experience, that a good ship's company ought never, if possible, to be separated; but on the other hand, nothing can be more necessary than the total separation of a bad one. But I believe few of that description would be found, if the practice of sending all kinds of vagabonds on board a man of war was discontinued.

When a line-of-battle ship's crew are drafted, particularly if they have served long in a ship of that description, they ought to have a chance of prize-money, and two frigates could be well

* Leave is now liberally given; but the system of paying the men just before they sail is still continued.

† It is now discontinued.

manned with the different watches, thus keeping them as much together as possible.

It sometimes happens, and it ought to happen much oftener, that a Captain commanding a bad frigate is removed into a better and larger one, on account of his activity and good conduct. The officers and ship's company who aided and assisted him are, however, rarely thought of.

What a gratifying thing it would be to these men, were the Admiralty (when such a removal took place at home and into a new ship) to order the Captain to run his ship alongside the other, and turn all hands over to her, informing them that the Admiralty had put them into a better ship, in consequence of their good conduct. Many similar marks of approbation could be conferred on ships' companies with a little trouble, and without inconvenience to the service; but it has generally happened that whoever had the arrangement of manning the Navy, seldom troubled their heads about conciliating and encouraging the seamen: they were generally drafted by twenties, thirties, &c., good and bad, without ever thinking they had any claim for indulgence on the score of conduct or not; it was more easily done, and that was enough; and when frequent punishments took place, and the people deserted, the Admiralty blamed the Captains, and they again the officers, and so on, one with as much justice as the other. The root of the evil is with the Board of Admiralty, and there it will remain until a system of encouraging and rewarding merit in officers and men is adopted.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

A POST CAPTAIN.

Vevay, Switz., April 20, 1816.

To the same.

My Lord, The injustice and impolicy of reducing the seamen and marines so low, while a large standing army is kept up, leads me to trouble your Lordship with a few remarks on that head. As I am aware the disaffected state of a great proportion of the lower orders is alleged as a sufficient reason for keeping up

the army, I shall take the liberty, in the first instance, of pointing out a corps which would have been perfectly capable of keeping down that spirit, and could have been kept up more constitutionally, more usefully, and at less expence than an army, I mean that gallant and neglected corps, the marines, who instead of being the first to be turned adrift, ought to have been the last. They are a body of men, without exception, more useful than any other that receive the king's pay—they have always shewn themselves fit for every description of service. Employ them on board or on shore, as soldiers or sailors, to mount a guard or fit out a fleet, they are always ready, and you never hear a grumble from them.

Why then, my Lord, may I ask, are they reduced to so low an establishment? Why are not our sea-port towns, dock-yards, hospitals, &c., left to be entirely guarded by them? Are they not to be trusted? or would the keeping them up to a large establishment be attended with more expence than the Army?

No, my Lord, it is because their officers are not men of family and interest, and that corps affords no patronage to the Government. It is alleged, as a reason for keeping up the immense establishment at Woolwich, the length of time necessary to form the Artillery. It certainly does not require so much time to form the Marines; but it ought to be recollected, if they are not disciplined in peace, there is little opportunity of doing it in war. On board a ship is not the place to form either officers or men. But there is a much more powerful reason for keeping up the marine establishment; which is, that at the beginning of a sudden war, you may be able to fit out your fleet before the enemy. After the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, the marines, assisted by the Greenwich pensioners and riggers, fitted out the greatest part of the fleet, and they would again do it, even before it was possible to man it.

I am aware that the wear and tear of ships is a great expence to the country; but that is obviated, in some measure, by keeping the greater part in our different ports; and if their crews were composed entirely of seamen, and instead of being reduced, were increased one-third, with only half the number of Marines embarked, in order that they might not be too crowded, it would render fewer ships necessary, and at the beginning of a war, by drafting one watch into another ship, you would double the Navy. The ships ready with their full proportion of Marines on board

would not be ill-manned, and would soon complete their numbers; the other watches, with the ardour that a new war would instil into their minds, would have their ships ready in much less than a month, thus making a respectable Navy before your enemies' eyes were open. The rest of the fleet, with the marines, pensioners, and riggers, would be ready as soon as it was possible to man it.

Continental nations, as the Army is the arm they have occasion for, pay the greatest attention to it; one would naturally suppose that as we cannot have our country marched into, it would be advisable to keep up our Navy. At the beginning of a war, the Army is of no use without the former; we would hardly attempt to put them on board of transports, to strike a blow at any of the enemy's ports without a fleet; and even if we did, the Marines are much better calculated for a coup-de-main than the Army. The same number would be on shore, and in possession of a place, before the soldiers had recovered their sea-sickness.

Depend upon it, my Lord, the time will come, and is not far distant, when we will require all the strength and talent of the country to keep the Navy above water. Inform yourself, my Lord, from officers who have lately been in America, what is the state of their Navy, and the sentiments of the officers and people with regard to it. It is an old expression, and a very true one, that a new broom sweeps clean; theirs is new; and from the captain down to the boy that uses it, their whole ideas are centred in beating the British. Our broom is very old, and unless it is put to rights, we may bid adieu to the naval superiority of the British Flag.

I fear your Lordship will think it great presumption in a Post-Captain addressing you as I have done; but I assure you, my Lord, I am actuated by no other feeling than a desire to save from ruin the naval profession; and if the few naval members we have in the House of Commons, had independence and public spirit sufficient to tell a plain story, there would have been no occasion for my letters.

> "Then, oh! protect the hardy tar,
> Be mindful of his merit,
> And when again you're plunged in war,
> He'll show his daring spirit."

I can point out a great many situations the salary of which would go a great way in employing more seamen, and I shall

begin with your Lordship's Board. Surely, if they were found adequate to transact the naval business during the war, the Sea Lords, with your Lordship at their head, and one Secretary, would now be fully sufficient.

It may not here be improper to remark, how the feelings of the Navy are hurt at seeing a military man associated with the Lords of the Admiralty; if the Government wished to give a situation to the Marquis of ——, surely they might have found one more fit for him than a seat at the Board of Admiralty. Civilians being there is less objectionable; but it is grating to our feelings to see a Coronet placed there. Suppose the army was ruled by a Board, instead of a Commander-in-Chief, what would the Duke of Wellington say were he to receive orders signed by a Captain in the Navy, for it generally happens that the members, and not the Secretary, put their names to orders?— or suppose there was a Military Board, with Lord St. Vincent at its head, giving orders, or perhaps a reprimand, to the first Captain of the age? It is equally improper to give the situations in the Marines to naval officers. I was in hopes, on the vacancy taking place the other day, to have seen that custom discontinued. The Navy have few sinecures, and it is a pity they should have any at the expense of so deserving a corps, particularly if they are to be given to reward officers for their services at the Admiralty.

I am not acquainted with the various duties the Navy Board have to perform, but with the Navy reduced so low as 20,000 men, it is impossible there can be employment for a Comptroller and seven Commissioners, three Surveyors, and a Victualling Board of seven: I conceive at least one half of them could be dispensed with*.

The Commissioner's duty at Sheerness should be performed by the Admiral, and that at Woolwich and Deptford by the Navy Board, as formerly.

The Commissioner's duty at Malta, Antigua, Jamaica, and Halifax, should likewise be performed by the Admirals; and if the dock yard is going on at Bermuda, as it certainly ought to do, there ought to be some man of talent to conduct it, or it will cost more, and be worse arranged, than any in the British dominions.

* The Navy Board is now abolished.

At the Cape of Good Hope, the Commissioner should be continued, as the Admiral is seldom there, and in the East Indies also, the station being so extensive and so far from England. I am aware that many naval men will disapprove of reducing the situations I have mentioned, as it is generally their opinion that the Government are too ready to take away the few good situations the Navy possess.

Though I am also of that opinion, I can see no reason why useless situations should be kept up for the sake of individuals. The civil branch of the Navy (and there are many inferior ones which I have not mentioned) ought to be reduced in time of peace as low as possible, and the active part kept up as high as the country will bear it. Individuals alone suffer by losing their situations (and there is no greater hardship in their being put on half-pay, than in the Admirals and Captains of the Fleet) but the profession will be ruined if the active part is kept as low as it at present is.

I have the honour to be,
Your Lordship's obedient servant,
A POST CAPTAIN.

Geneva, May 1st, 1816.

To the same.

My Lord, The impressment of seamen is beyond a doubt unjust, and its necessity its only apology. It could not be done away with entirely, but I think it might be so modified as to deprive it of its worst features; and peace is the proper time to try the experiment. I have studied the subject with some attention, and the following plan appears to me good, and easy to be carried into execution.

First. Appoint in all the Sea Ports of the United Kingdom, Naval Officers, as Captains of the Port, to register the seamen sailing out of them, and make them all liable to serve a certain time in the Navy, if required.

Secondly. Fix the number of seamen and apprentices for each merchant ship, according to her tonnage, and let the proportion be large in time of peace.

Thirdly. Prohibit masters of merchant ships embarking sea-

men without a copy of their register describing them, &c. and which, by way of security, should be kept by the master.

Fourthly. Each merchant ship to have a certificate from the Captain of the Port, of the number of men embarked, and none to be shipped afterwards.

Fifthly. In order to avoid confusion, and to insure the seamen returning to the port from whence they sailed, they should be engaged to complete the voyage, and half their pay kept in hand till completed.

Sixthly. Should a seaman die, or desert, a certificate should be obtained from the Captain of the Port (or, if a Foreign port, from the Consul), at which such death or desertion took place, or if the death happened at sea, the first port touched at afterwards; and the register given up, together with his pay, to be immediately remitted to the Captain of the port from whence the vessel sailed: should he have died, the money shall be, of course, given to his friends, but should he have deserted, to Greenwich Hospital. These precautions would be very necessary, particularly as regards desertion, as it frequently happens, that Masters of merchant ships treat the men very ill, with the view of pocketing their money in that event.

Seventhly. Should a seaman insist on his discharge before completing his voyage, his register should be given up in the presence of the Captain of the port, or the Consul, if at a foreign port, who should certify the same in his articles, and any other ship that was not complete, should be at liberty to embark him, receiving a proper certificate of embarkation. The Captain of the port should investigate the case, and if the seaman had been ill treated, his whole pay should be given, but if on the contrary, half should be forfeited to the owners.

Eighthly. Should any Master embark a seaman, without a copy of register, or a registered seaman, without the knowledge of the Captain of the Port, he should be liable to a severe penalty*.

The above regulations would render concealment next to impossible, and the Admiralty would be in possession of the

* It frequently happens that men are embarked without their tickets; sufficient attention is not paid at the Custom House to the regulations; captains, in falling in with merchant ships, should muster them, and report any seamen found on board without his registration ticket.

number of seamen sailing out of the United Kingdom, which would enable them, at the commencement of a war, to call out the number wanted; beginning of course with the youngest, and those who have never served. The Captains of the Ports would then order them to be discharged into men-of-war, sent to receive them, and they should as soon as possible be conveyed to their proper ship, which should be left to their option in arriving at the port to which they were destined; and they should never be kept like prisoners in a receiving ship, which would at once disgust them with the service. A liberal bounty should be paid each seaman on being called upon, and those who on being discharged from a merchant ship, did not come forward within a certain time, should lose a part of it, and have an additional term of service exacted from them*.

Men-of-war, on falling in with merchant ships at sea, should on no account whatever be allowed to impress their men; the whole should be left to be regulated on their arrival by the Captain of the Port; all appearance of force ought to be avoided, except rendering it impossible for the seamen called upon, to get employment in the merchant service, which I am of opinion would be quite sufficient to bring them forward; some might hang back till their money was gone, but I do not think a sailor could live or find employment on shore, any length of time.

The term of service should be limited as low as possible; to be determined on after examining the Registers. Twenty-one years appears to me much too long to oblige a man to serve; a sailor's life after that time is not worth much†. When he had completed his term of service, he should be immediately discharged, and sent home if abroad; but should he choose to extend his service, an additional bounty, and every possible encouragement should be given him.

The number of apprentices should be very high during the war,

* By Sir James Graham's Act, if seamen come forward within five days after the issuing of the proclamation, the seamen are entitled to a double bounty, and all then actually in the Navy are entitled to a bounty. This is unnecessary and expensive; the bounty to them already in the Navy, should only be given if war actually took place; the moment the proclamation is issued, the Government would have to pay half a million of money, and the necessity might cease in a few weeks without war. I tried to alter this, but was not supported.

† Sir James Graham's Bill exacts five years' service—it is too short.

after a certain service at sea, they should be called out to replace those men who had completed their time. As it is not to be supposed that the above plan would be sufficient to man the fleet, the maritime counties should be exempted entirely from the Militia, and their quota of men drawn for the Navy, which would amply supply landsmen; their time of service should also be limited, and more attention paid than generally is to that class, who are commonly put in the waste, and no means whatever used to make them seamen. I have always been in the habit of putting a certain number in each part of the ship, and seldom failed of making useful and active men, who could never, in a line-of battle ship have been higher than the gangway, for any other purpose than hoisting in beer and water.

Your Lordship will observe, that the plan I propose would oblige every man, on entering the merchant service, to become a King's seaman for a certain period of years. I don't apprehend it would at all discourage men following a sailor's life; there would be no unjust compulsion, at least it would not appear so; and as all would be equally treated, none could complain: those who had served their time in a man-of-war, would enjoy their pension, and feel themselves at ease, in a merchant ship, without any fear of impressment; and when too old to go to sea, would enjoy a competence among their friends: their comfortable situation in their declining years would render them grateful to their country, and be the means of making parents send their children to sea, as a certain means of procuring them bread in their youth, and a comfortable retirement in their old age; and if the seaman's life was ameliorated when serving, as I have before pointed out, I have no doubt but the time would arrive, when the naval service, would become the pride, instead of the detestation of the lower orders.

The registering of seamen must necessarily become the law of the land. Impressment, though sanctioned by custom and necessity, is not an acknowledged law*. Many who are great advocates for the liberty of the subject, may hesitate at forcing by law so

* Impressment, I presume, would again be attempted in case of necessity; but it would be necessary to raise an army to carry it out. I should like to see how long a press-gang durst show their faces at any of the great mercantile seaports.

many men to serve the King, and prefer winking at the continuation of indiscriminate pressing, which, however, is little better than seizing slaves on the coast of Africa. Could they but be on one cruize on the coast of England, in a man-of-war, on the impress service, I think they would soon be disgusted; there they would see sailors coming from a long voyage, with the hope of seeing their wives and families, dragged from their hiding-places, many without receiving their wages, which their masters are often too well pleased to make excuses to keep, and the Captains at other times too impatient to wait for, sent like slaves, on their arrival in port, on board a guard-ship, and though just returned from abroad, perhaps drafted into some man-of-war on the point of sailing for the East or West Indies, leaving their wages for ever in the hands of their former masters, and most probably their wives and families, should they have any, in a state of starvation. These are a few of the evils of impressment, which has gone on for many years, without an attempt to change it. As it is impossible to man the fleet by volunteers, when the merchants pay four times the wages of the Government, the question is, shall we have a systematic plan for completing the Navy, or allow it to be manned in the disgraceful way it has hitherto been. I am convinced, the seamen themselves would prefer being called upon in the way I have proposed, as it would put them all on a footing. The merchant service must have men, and where could they get better than the old seamen, who had faithfully served their King and Country, and who would instruct the apprentices in the ways and customs of a man-of-war, thus making it at once a lucrative retirement, and a nursery for the Navy.

I shall continue to trouble your Lordship with my sentiments, from time to time, though I have little hope of seeing any good done for the naval service, till some one of the profession, in the House of Commons, has talent, perseverance, and independence, sufficient to bring its real state under consideration. Hitherto, the naval men who have sat there, have done more harm than good; the present ones, it is hoped, will do better; if not, we must look forward to a war with America, as the only means of opening the eyes of the country.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

Paris, Nov. 1, 1819. A POST CAPTAIN.

To the same.

My Lord, It is with much satisfaction I observe your Lordship has ceded something to the feelings of the Navy in accepting the resignation of the Military Lord of the Admiralty, who, I hope, has now received a sufficient insight into Naval affairs to convince him he must follow some other road to fame; and it is to be regretted your Lordship has not been more particular in the choice of a successor. If it is really necessary to have three land Lords at the Board during peace, there are many men of talent and science to be found, and a still greater number of men of business, who would be of real service to the Navy and their country; but what benefit either will receive from the late appointment, is, I presume, known only to your Lordship*.

When the question was agitated in the last Parliament, it was alleged that it was a school for young statesmen: that defence is, however, now wisely abandoned, as it might have been asked why a more subordinate situation could not have been found to educate them, such as under secretary to the Board, or private secretary to your Lordship, which would not only be attended with less expence, but would effectually exclude young men having no turn for business, and who accept the situation for the sake of the emoluments and consequence they think it gives them. Sir George Cockburn has, however, found out, to the astonishment of the world, a new defence still worse than the first; he appears to think that, as no Naval men are likely to agree, it is advantageous to have a young gentleman who knows nothing at all about it, to decide who is right, and who is wrong. I shall not make many animadversions on that part of his speech, as I am convinced an officer of his sense and experience never could have meant what he said, and I attribute it entirely to the confusion he felt on first addressing the House of Commons, particularly when obliged to defend a measure he knew to be bad; but, I confess at the same time, I was astonished that such an independent man as Sir George has always been considered in the Navy, should have lent himself in any way to countenance it. Identified as he is with

* There is only one lay Lord at present, and that is quite unnecessary.

the Ministry, he could not be expected to oppose their measures; but his friends and admirers (and they are many) would have been well pleased had he not that day entered the House of Commons; and it is to be hoped he does not intend following the steps of another Admiral, who, by his speeches on Naval affairs, has brought upon himself the hatred and detestation of the whole service. To pretend that the Board has more to do now than in war, is too ridiculous even to endeavour to refute; that they are constantly receiving plans for the improvement of the hulls, guns, rigging of ships, and astronomical instruments, I can easily believe; and it is a very good reason for having men of talent and science at the Board, but a very bad one for employing such men as generally are there.

In one part of his speech he completely proves, without intending it, the total uselessness of the lay Lords; he says, what I believe is very true, that since he came to the Admiralty, he has hardly had half an hour to take a walk. Now, it is not to be supposed such hard duty would fall upon him, were the others capable of performing theirs. No, my Lord, it is their total ignorance of business that throws the whole of it on the sea Lords; and, in fact, it is a common expression, and one that I have frequently heard made use of by the Lords of the Admiralty themselves, that their lay brethren receive their thousand a year for signing their names, and that is well known to every Naval officer who has sat at the Board. Their salaries, trifling as they appear, my Lord, would pay and victual the crew of a sloop of war. Sir George also points out the impropriety of having a cabinet minister at the head of the Board. Your Lordship's other duties, he observes, leave you but little time to attend to that of First Lord of the Admiralty; a very candid confession of the confidential sea Lord, that the Navy of England, its only constitutional defence, and once the pride and glory of the country, is without an efficient head, and that the administration of its affairs is only a secondary consideration to its chief*.

The patronage is, I believe, the chief part attended to by the

* Sir George Cockburn's opinion ought to have had some weight; but it would have had more had he refused to serve in such a capacity when Sir Robert Peel came into office in 1841.

first Lord*, and that will be the case until a permanent Board is formed, whose exclusive attention shall be paid to the Navy.

Whether the first Lord of that Board should or should not be a naval officer is a disputed point, and one that I will not pretend to decide; it is, however, my opinion that it is preferable he should see with his own eyes than with those of another. It was the fashion to abuse Lord St. Vincent when he sat there; he was beyond doubt too severe; but a man of merit was sure of being taken by the hand by him. It is natural, my Lord, that officers who have zealously served their country, and braved dangers in its defence, should feel more for those who are treading the same path, than your Lordship, or any other diplomatic character, whose hearts are hardened by the routine of office, and the necessity of attending to claims from men who possess great influence in the state; besides, my Lord, it is annoying to the feelings of officers, to be obliged to state their services to a chief who knows not how to appreciate them. Did the patronage lay in the Board it would be different; but all the world knows, that in the nod of the first Lord depends the fate of every officer in the Navy; and when that Lord is a civilian, and pressed on all sides by political applications, it is not to be wondered at that so little notice is taken of meritorious officers.

I shall here point out to your Lordship the great injustice to individuals, and the injury done to the service by the system that takes place abroad, on a change of Admiralty, or, indeed, on a change of the first Lord.

On every foreign station the Admiral is furnished with a list of officers to be promoted into any Admiralty vacancies that may occur; some few of these officers have been sent out on account of their services, and a still greater number by their political interest; they have been, of course, at considerable expence in fitting themselves out for the superior rank which they had every prospect of being raised to, and others have been actually appointed to ships, fitted out their cabins, and laid in a stock at an expence of perhaps £500 and upwards. On a new first Lord coming into office, his first act is to supersede all those who are not confirmed, and make an entire change in the list, without paying the least

* Sir Francis Baring, on his examination by the Committee on salaries, confirms this.

attention to the expence the officers have been put to, and to the disappointment they must feel in losing their rank. It cannot be expected that officers so treated can again do their duty in a subordinate situation with satisfaction to themselves or their Captain. This, my Lord, I have seen happen to the same officer two or three times following; and as for midshipmen, it was not uncommon to see them acting Lieutenants for years on a foreign station, and on their arrival in England, sent back to the cock-pit*.

Should the change of ministry be complete, no mercy whatever is shewn even to men who have been promoted for their services; a general degradation of officers takes place on every foreign station. Should the first Lord only be changed, the injury to the service is not so great; but there is nothing certain—all depends on his caprice. The Naval men, who alone are capable of judging who ought to be promoted for their services, sit there obedient to the will of the Premier, who has too many friends to provide for, on coming into office, to attend to their recommendation. I do not allude to your Lordship in particular; what I have stated is and must be the case as long as we are ruled by men receiving a diplomatic education, and while we had French† and Spaniards to deal with only, it was all very well: things are now changed; we have an enemy (for, though at peace, I consider America our bitterest enemy), I fear as courageous as ourselves, and one who will have the advantage over us as long as their Navy keeps in proportion to their population, or, rather, as long as it is so much inferior to ours as to oblige them to act upon the defensive. We have an immense Navy, and in that Navy must have an immense number of bad officers, and they have, generally speaking, as much interest as others, and will of course be employed.

The American Navy is small, and the ships they send to sea will be better manned than ours, and by volunteers better fed and paid, and better found in every respect, and will be commanded by their best officers; and we cannot always pick and choose the ships they are to fall in with; they will leave their ports with the

* This is now very properly put an end to.

† The visit to Cherbourg has shown us that the French are not what they were. I have seen no Spanish ships, and, therefore, can form no opinion of them.

certainty of fighting, well disciplined at their guns, and with all the zeal and energy of a young Navy, buoyed up with success, and full of confidence; our ships, on the other hand, will leave their ports, not with the same certainty of fighting, and will in consequence, I fear, be less attentive to that part of their discipline*. I don't mean to say all will be so, but a great many; and we cannot be sure that only our best officers, and best manned ships, will meet the Americans; should that, however, be the case, I hope and trust, nay, I am almost certain they will beat them; but, on the other hand, our defeat is certain, and our Naval character in consequence lost. That once gone, all is over with England; it has already greatly suffered in the opinion of Europe, and it will cost much to recover it; and, unless we change our system, we never shall.

In answer to Lord Darnley, in the House of Lords, on the subject of the Navy, your Lordship's opinion, and that of Lord Liverpool, appear to be, that it never was in a more efficient state than at present; and the last time it was brought forward you appear to have succeeded in satisfying his Lordship on that head: if it is meant that the ships are now in a better state of repair, I perfectly agree with your Lordship; but in every other point, I am decidedly of a different opinion, and, I believe I may safely say, two-thirds of the Navy are of the same way of thinking; and we are disgusted at the manner in which they are neglected.

It is alleged that we have as many ships as we want, and Sir George Cockburn says, that instead of the seamen being out of employment, he cannot find men for the ships now in commission; while Sir George Warrender, in the same debate, tells the House of Commons, that we possess the means of manning the Navy on the breaking out of a war, both energetically and expeditiously: the former proves that the seamen will not serve in the Navy in peace, though they are nearly as well paid as in the merchant service; and the latter asserts, that on a war breaking out, he has only to call them, and they will leave their wages, which will be immediately augmented, to serve in the Navy. Sir George Warrender may very probably have studied political economy, but I am well assured he has not paid much attention to the economy of a seaman's mind†.

* The gun practice is now good, and is improving every day.

† In 1841, when we wished to increase the Navy, our line-of-battle ships

Were the Prince Regent and the rest of the royal family as fond of the Navy as they are of the Army, I have not the smallest doubt but the Government would find abundance of excuses to keep it up; they would say that it was absolutely necessary to be prepared for war, and that the officers and men must be kept in active habits; that it would always be wanted before the army; that the Marines ought to be disciplined in peace, and could do all the seaport duties instead of the Army, and, in the event of a war, would fit the fleet out; and that the Militia could be called out to supply their places until the Army was raised; and, lastly, that it was a constitutional defence, and ought not to be neglected. "Give me," says Mr. Tierney, "a well-manned Navy and a full Exchequer, and I will defy the world:" these were words worthy of a British statesman, and should be deeply engraven in the hearts of every prince and minister of Britain. Repairing our ships, my Lord, is not sufficient; it is on the officers who command these ships, and the men who man them, that our fate depends.

I have said, in a former letter, and I now repeat it, that unless a change takes place in our system, our fleets and ships will be commanded by worn out old men, and manned, as it hitherto has been, by prisoners, not by free men. It is well known, my Lord, to all the world, that the present system of manning the Navy in war is by force, and force is used, and must be used throughout, as long as that system continues: nothing is done with good will except in those ships who are making prize-money, actively employed, and are in the habit of constantly allowing their people to go on shore; then, indeed, their hardships are forgot, but they form a very small part of the Navy. Our fleets, from one end of the year to the other, have the same duty, nothing to stimulate them; no fighting, no leave, and abroad no pay.

I am aware that there are many objections to giving Captains flags for meritorious services, over the heads of their seniors, and I have no doubt that it would at first by very unpopular; but it is all ideal; it happens every day to Lieutenants and Commanders, and without any consideration of merit whatever; and guarded as I have done it against abuse, I cannot conceive it would be otherwise than beneficial to the service. Who could have objected to

lay at Spithead upwards of six months waiting for men. The French Navy was increased long before ours; they have a system—we have none.

the selection of Sir Charles Brisbane for the capture of Curaçoa, Lord Cochrane for the destruction of the Rochefort squadron, Sir William Hoste for his gallant action, and several other distinguished officers.

Sir Philip Broke is another officer who deserves well of his country. The superior discipline of the Shannon shewed at once what could and what ought to have been done: had he fallen in with the first American frigate, I don't apprehend they would ever have sent another ship to sea. The action with the Guerriere opened their eyes; they before held our Navy in the greatest dread, and were no doubt astonished at the little injury they sustained. The capture of the Macedonian and several brigs took place afterwards in the same way. Poor Captain Lambert, who gallantly fell, could not be expected to do more. It is not generally known in what state he was sent to sea, how he was manned, and what little opportunity he had of disciplining his ship; and it is to be regretted some one in the action has not laid before the world a statement of his case, and thus have rescued his name from the species of obloquy attending an unsuccessful action. The officers and crews of the ship captured were tried and acquitted: the loss of the Guerriere was attributed to the defective state of her masts; but it could not have been owing to them that she lost about six times as many men as her opponent, unless her loss took place subsequent to their fall, which I presume was not the case: there was not the same excuse for the other captured ships, all of whom, I believe, lost men nearly in the same proportion, and were as easily knocked up. The Pelican, I believe, was the only brig that gave a good account of her opponent. Trying officers for the loss of their ships was not sufficient; for as long as they kept up their colours till sinking, or until completely beat, they must be acquitted, provided no glaring mismanagement was proved. The Courts-Martial ought to have been ordered to investigate into the discipline of the ships, and the state of their crews previous to the action, and then the blame would have fallen were it ought; in short, it ought to have been a grand national question; Parliament ought to have taken it up, and sifted it to the bottom; it would then have been known to Europe at large what was the cause of our disaster; at present it is only known that American frigates and corvettes have taken English ones. The difference in size is only evident to profes-

sional men, and the Americans take as much pains as possible to keep the world ignorant of it; but had the great council of the nation investigated the case, and thrown the blame on the shoulders of those who deserved it—on the Captains, if the ships were in a bad state of discipline—on the Admiralty, if badly manned—and if neither was the case, but owing entirely to the disparity of force —the fame of the officers would have been cleared up, and the eyes of Europe opened to the truth. That system was not followed up, and it is gone abroad, that there is no difficulty in beating a British man-of-war.

The Admiralty, instead of better manning the ships (for the small addition they gave was nothing) and expressing their astonishment and regret at their being taken without inflicting any serious injury on the enemy, and their determination to make the severest example of those whose ships were in bad order, issued a secret order not to engage the large American frigates, thus throwing all the odium on the Captains, and bringing them into contempt with their officers and ship's company. If the Admiralty did not wish us to fight, the order ought to have been public; but even that would have been impolitic: they ought, on the contrary, to have exhorted us not to give way till the last moment, and encouraged us by every means in their power to defend the glory of the British flag to the last.

Should it have been proved by several well-fought actions that we were not equal to them, then, and not till then, should a public order have been given, specifying the reasons that we were not to engage them, but leaving it to our own discretion.

The plan of allowing men of a certain age and standing on the list, to retire with the rank of Rear-Admiral, would, I am convinced, be highly beneficial to the service. I believe, at this moment, officers are permitted to become out-pensioners of Greenwich, receiving £80 a year, in addition to their half-pay. The encouragement to retire is, however, not sufficient; officers do not like, after long services, to finish their career as Captains: give them the rank of Rear-Admirals; the expense would not be great, and it would be gratifying to the feelings of old officers, who had long and faithfully served, but had not been successful in gaining their promotion young, to retire on something comfortable, and with a superior rank, seeking in the bosom of their families that repose for which they are more calculated than the fatigues of

active employment*. Depend upon it, my Lord, the service would gain in many respects; and I know of no other objection but the apparent determination of the Admiralty to jog on with the old system, without paying any attention to the change of circumstances, produced by the immense increase of our Navy, and the still greater change about to be produced by the increasing Naval power of America.

We hardly read a paper in which there is not an account of their constructing arsenals, building ships, aggrandizing their territory, and increasing their means of bringing up hardy seamen.

What a different picture we have in this country; our apathy is unaccountable. We repair our ships and arsenals it is true, but there our exertions end; the few ships we have in commission are half manned, the guard-ships not manned at all; our marine corps, instead of being kept up, and our seaports and arsenals garrisoned by it, turned adrift to make room for a large military establishment,) the cavalry of which alone is equal to the whole of the seamen employed) and which can be of no use at the beginning of a war. Till lately, our seamen were starving in the streets, and many of them have taken refuge in foreign countries. We have signed treaties in favour of American commerce; the key of Jamaica is about to fall into the hands of our bitterest enemy; and ere long we will see them in possession of some important post in the Mediterranean, perhaps Minorca or Sicily. I know nothing about the present state of the French marine, nor if the Bourbon Government is likely to turn their attention to it; but I must remind your Lordship, that in the latter part of the war they began to pluck up a little spirit, no doubt from the example of the Americans, and our ships did not find them such an easy conquest as formerly, and three or four frigates succeeded in making a drawn battle of it. The American war has been an epoch in our naval history; and, although the eyes of many of

* In 1846, Sir Robert Peel consented to a retired list, after I had brought it before Parliament for five years unsuccessfully. It was carried out by the Government that succeeded him. Officers of sixty years of age and long service were allowed to retire with the rank and pay of a Rear-Admiral, and officers of fifty on a pound and eighteen shillings a day. This ought to have been final; but when the retired Admirals are reduced to twenty-five, the latter class succeed to the pay of a Rear-Admiral, whereas, it ought to have been reserved for old officers on the action list to induce them to retire.

our naval officers are now open, those of the Government seem as fast closed as ever, and I fear nothing will rouse them but an indignant nation, in the event of a war, calling loudly for vengeance on their heads for the disgrace which must inevitably befal the British flag. A war with either France or America (which from the animosity entertained by both nations against England, must happen sooner or later), will not long be single handed: the question of impressment, blockades, right of search, &c., will be again stirred up, and I don't apprehend that Alexander the liberator, whose eyes are now open, will tamely submit to the rules we formerly imposed, and the Danes have not yet forgot the loss of their fleet. The only friend we are likely to have is the King of Sweden: it is his interest to keep well with us, and it is no less ours to secure his support. Be assured, my Lord, if the French remain internally quiet, the attention of the maritime powers of Europe will be turned to the Navy of England, and the more friends we secure the better.

In a former letter, I pointed out to your Lordship a system for manning the Fleet, which appears to be preferable to the one now in practice; and I can see no reason why it should not be carried to our colonies. Formerly, in the Army, we had Greek and Maltese corps. Why should we not encourage the inhabitants of Malta and the Ionian Islands to serve in the Navy also? Such a measure would, no doubt, be attended with many difficulties and objections; but a wise Administration would overcome them all. The population of Malta is great: in the time of the Order they had one or two line-of-battle ships, several frigates, and galleys of their own. Their youth should be encouraged to enter the Navy: nothing would identify them so much with England as several of them rising to rank. A small corps of Marines might also be formed; and, in the event of a sudden war, if small vessels were laid up there, they could be manned by the quota the island could furnish: our pay would be handsome for them, and if they made prize-money, and were well treated, volunteers would not be wanting. As we are the protectors of the Ionian Islands, nothing can be more just than that they should assist in protecting themselves; the same plan should be followed up there, and indeed it ought to be a part of our colonial system throughout. The population of England is not, and never was sufficient to supply both the Navy and Merchant Service with seamen; and

as all her possessions receive the protection of her flag, they, in their turns, should assist in defending it. Officers of the Navy would, in general, dislike men of that description in their ships; but every feeling ought to give way to the public good; and I have no doubt but, with a little time and perseverance, they would become excellent seamen. They are our subjects, and far preferable to foreigners and the sweepings of our jails; the former carry our discipline into their own countries, and the latter destroy the feeling that ought to exist in the seamen, and tend to corrupt the whole.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

A POST CAPTAIN.

London, November 18, 1819.

To the same.

My Lord, The state of the seamen I have entered into in a former letter, and I shall at present confine myself to their treatment when serving abroad. Wherever the Army serve, they are regularly paid. Seamen, on the contrary, may be abroad for five—for ten years, or during the war, without receiving a farthing: if they are without prize-money, they must go to the purser, and take up a jacket and trowsers they are ashamed to wear—that circumstance alone damps their spirit. If the keeping back their pay is intended to prevent desertion, it has a contrary effect. A sailor does not reflect what he will lose; he feels at the moment that he is uncomfortable: he cannot go on shore, even if he has leave—he has no money: should he be detected in taking up slops and selling them, he is flogged: he cannot even procure a change of diet. Should women be allowed to come on board, he has another temptation; and if our greatest men have been tempted by them to do wrong, what can be expected from a poor sailor* ?

It is a fact sufficiently known, that men receiving prize-money,

* This is corrected; seamen receive their pay abroad, and monthly pay at home; but the abominable system of not paying the men till the day they sail, or the day before, is still in force.

and being allowed to spend it on shore, rarely desert; when, on the other hand, men receiving money, and not being allowed to spend it, always do.

Let us see the difference at this moment, my Lord, between the seamen of the greatest maritime power in the world, England, and those of a power that has only within a few years claimed the name of a maritime power, America. Both have squadrons in the Mediterranean. The latter come into port well manned, well clothed, well paid, and are handled like men of war; the former come into the same port ill manned, clothed in pursers' slops, ill managed, and ill paid—or rather, not paid. The Americans go on shore, spend their money, and laugh at the poor Englishmen, who have none; and yet we are astonished at their getting disgusted and deserting!

The economical principle of half-manning our Navy in peace, will be one cause, amongst many others, of its ruin; and though, God knows, it was low enough before, your Lordship has lately made a reduction in the guardships. I believe, on my conscience, officers, during a three years' service of peace, receive more harm than good: they have not men to handle their ships as they ought to be, and, in consequence, acquire indolent and slovenly habits of carrying on duty, which they will never get the better of, and the seamen the same. The Government have certainly forgotten that Great Britain is an island; or perhaps some terrible convulsion of nature is expected to unite it to the Continent; that is the only possible way of accounting for the depression of the Navy and elevation of the Army.

I am convinced the distinguished naval officers who have seats at the Admiralty, cannot approve of its low state; and I almost hope your Lordship is averse to it. It is to be regretted you do not point out to the Government what they are about; their whole attention ought to be turned to the Marine, if they wish to maintain the dominion of the seas. The time will come when we shall be obliged to contend for our existence as a maritime nation; all Buonaparte's empire, all his navy, and all his decrees against commerce, were nothing in comparison to the danger arising from the increasing navy of America. It was the bravery of the English army, that taught the Continental nations that the French were to be beaten; take care that the Americans do not show the maritime powers, that the English navy can be beaten also. When

that sad day arrives, farewell to old England's glory, her power, her riches, her proud station in Europe—all, all will be lost; to maintain her where she is, depends, entirely and alone, on the skill, bravery, and discipline of the British seamen.

I shall conclude this letter with a few remarks on Sir George Warrender's reply to Mr. Birch, on the subject of impressment. He says that it is a difficult question, and that he cannot be expected to give a decisive answer on the subject, and that its advantages fully make up for the disadvantages attending it; and he assures the House the situation of the seamen is much ameliorated, and that the Government, by means of the registry of pensioned seamen, possess the means of fitting out a fleet with energy and promptitude. I allow that the question of impressment is difficult, and that the situation of the seamen is a little ameliorated; but I cannot agree with Sir George, that the advantages of impressment more than make up for its cruelty, for I will call it by its proper name; much less can I agree with him in supposing that the Government possess the means of fitting out a fleet either energetically or expeditiously; I can tell him that, in the event of a war breaking out to-morrow, not a pensioned seaman would voluntarily come forward; and how, in the name of fortune, could he expect men would leave four times the pay (which they would have in war time in the Merchant service) and their liberty, to serve in the Navy, and run the risk of imprisonment for the war.

No, indeed, my Lord; they would give their pensions up, were they double, or treble what they now are; they know, as well as Sir George Warrender, when they have a good berth; he, as well as the other land Lords, have often been called upon to leave the Admiralty, but in vain; and Jack, like them, will not go till forced. I am astonished the naval members could sit in their places, and hear Sir George Warrender make such a ridiculous speech, tending to deceive both parliament and country. Were all the seamen in Great Britain registered as I have proposed, and those who have served the least and never served at all first called out, we might get men; for the old sailors would find it their interest to prevent the young ones being employed, and they would see that they would not be called upon till absolutely wanted, and would feel that their pensions were more as a reward for their former services, than a trap to catch them when wanted.

It ought, no doubt, to be considered as a sort of retaining fee, but it ought not to be used as such till necessary. The seamen, when registered, should be divided into classes, composed of men who had served twenty-one years, fourteen, and so on; and at the beginning of a war, they should be called on by proclamation, and the merchant service prohibited, under severe penalties, from embarking them, and no excuse admitted, as the register would point out how long they had served the King. I have before observed, that I did not think any other compulsion necessary; but if it should be, it of course must be had recourse to; but still it would be fairer and better, and give more general satisfaction, than the indiscriminate impressment that has hitherto been followed, and must again in the event of a war, unless some legislative measure is adopted.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

A POST CAPTAIN.

Bury Hall, Stoke, June 1, 1817.

To the Right Hon. Lord Althorp.

My Lord, I conclude, by the remarks your Lordship made on the subject of impressment, when the naval estimates were before the house, it is one that has occupied your attention, and that you are no friend to a measure, at once disgraceful to a free country, injurious to its commerce, and cruel and unjust in its execution. I do not think it can be entirely suppressed, but I believe it may be so modified as to deprive it of its worst features.

All countries, with the exception of America, resort to a certain degree of compulsion, to provide seamen for the defence of the state. No country, however, but England, "the land of liberty," employs the violent and cruel measure of impressment, the execution of which being entrusted to so many different characters, is much more oppressive than the legislature are aware of. France, the next great maritime power to ourselves, employs compulsion, but it is done in so regular a manner, that there is really no great hardship in it, and no appearance of force whatever. In that country every merchant ship is obliged to embark

a certain number of seamen and boys, and they all know full well that they owe the country a certain servitude; and, indeed, no man can command a merchant ship, who has not served in the Navy. All seamen are registered by the Commissary of Marine, at the different seaports; and before the ship sails, the crew are mustered by him, and the Captain furnished with his *Role d'Equipage;* and he cannot afterwards either enter or discharge a man without his knowledge. They also receive their wages in his presence, and all complaints are examined on the spot. When men are wanted for the King's service, those who have never served, or not completed their time, are discharged from their respective ships, their passports given them, and they are sent to the nearest naval station. This is impressment in every sense of the word, but it is a milder way of doing it. There, men are not hunted by pressgangs, and torn from their ships and families, like felons; they are simply discharged from their ships, and as they cannot find employment in others, they very quietly go where they are ordered.

I shall now point out to your Lordship our system. On the first breaking out of war, and when it is decided to grant press-warrants, the ships of war, fit for sea, are ordered to proceed on the tracks of the homeward-bound trade, and lay violent hands on all men fit for service, leaving a bare sufficiency to take the ships into port. Many of these men are returning from long voyages, in hopes of seeing their wives and families, and sharing with them their hard-earned wages. Some Captains endeavour to get notes for their pay, which the generality of Masters are unwilling to give; and others make as many deductions as they can, well knowing that there is not much chance of hearing any further about them. Other Captains are either too thoughtless, or too impatient, to wait for settlements, or a strange sail may heave in sight, which they are anxious to chase, and the men are hurried away, and must trust to chance to recover their wages hereafter.

When the ship is full, she comes into port, completes her crew, and then turns the rest over to the flag-ship, from whence they are drafted to different ships, and sent to the East or West Indies, Mediterranean, or elsewhere. Those who have received notes for their wages, dispose of them to the Jews for half their value, and those who have been hurried away without settlement,

leave their wives and families to starve. Sailors are made of rough materials it is true, but still they have some feeling, and their families still more; and your Lordship can easily conceive how those feelings are outraged by such shameful treatment. On the arrival of the ship in port, the remainder make their escape, to avoid the pressgang, leaving their wages behind; those who remain, if good for any thing, are hurried on board the Tender, and the vessel is left to be taken care of by the Master, Mate, and apprentices.

All this, I have no doubt, will appear very hard to your Lordship, but it is nothing to what takes place in our seaports, on the first issuing out of press-warrants; then a general sweep of everybody takes place—seamen, landsmen, tradesmen, &c.; it matters not—all are hurried indiscriminately on board the Tender, and confined like slaves in the press-room: if a wife wants to get rid of her husband, a father of his son, or a son of his father, the pressgang are always at hand to accomplish it. The men fit for service are pushed off as fast as possible to the different ports, to preclude the possibility of obtaining their discharge, and nothing but an Admiralty order, or a writ of habeas corpus, can release them. The more men pressed by the gang, the more credit they get; and no kidnapping slaves on the coast of Africa is more infamous than the system followed in the seaports of England.

Hitherto, our legislature appear to have very little studied the subject, and have been satisfied with the opinion of the naval men in office, who found the system worked well, and saved them an infinity of trouble, and as they have never been hard pressed on the subject, no attempt has been made to change it.

At the conclusion of the war, a pension of ninepence a day was given to seamen who had served fourteen years, and one shilling a day to those who had served twenty-one years; after a short time the Government found they had been too liberal, and the pension for fourteen years' service was abolished.

There can be no doubt, that men who have served a certain number of years in the Navy, will come forward to complete their term; but the pension, after twenty-one years, will have no effect to induce youths to enter the Navy.

The time is much too distant to enter into their calculations; they are too thoughtless to look so far a-head, particularly in war, when the pay of the merchant is so much higher than the King's.

Having pointed out the evils of our present system, I shall proceed to show the remedies that ought to be applied, and which appear to me might be easily carried out:—

Firstly. All the seamen and apprentices should be registered at the different ports from whence they sail*.

Secondly. All seamen who are out of their apprenticeship, should be liable to serve the King, in the event of war†.

Thirdly. All apprentices actually embarked, after completing their term in the merchant service, should be obliged to serve one year in the King's service, before they could become registered seamen, and they should be liable to serve the King nine years in war.

Fourthly. All boys now entering the merchant service, should serve four years apprenticeship, and three in the Navy, before they could become registered seamen, and they should be liable to serve seven years in the event of war.

Fifthly. A bounty should be given to the seamen when called upon, equal to what is given to the soldier and marine‡.

Sixthly. Should a seaman re-enter for four years, he should receive another bounty, and have an increase of pay, and at the expiration of that term, he should receive a pension of ninepence a day.

Seventhly. Should he enter for four years longer, he should have another bounty, and at the expiration of his time, a pension of one shilling a day.

Eighthly. When serving abroad, he should have part of his pay, and be allowed to go on shore and spend it.

Ninthly. No man should ply as a waterman, or on the sea in any way, who had not served his time.

Tenthly. Preference should be given in all dockyards to artificers who have served in the Navy§.

Eleventhly. The maritime districts should be exempt from the militia, and the quota drawn for the Navy. This arrangement

* The seamen are now registered, but it is very imperfectly carried out by the Custom-house, and ships of war have no orders to muster the crews of merchant ships to see if any men are embarked without their tickets.

† Sir James Graham's bill now provides for this.

‡ On the issuing of the Queen's proclamation, all seamen coming forward within five days got a double bounty.

§ There is now an order to enter artificers who are paid off, but it is little attended to; the dockyard people set their faces against it.

would amply supply seamen; but as the militia are not obliged to serve abroad, it would be necessary, by some bounty, or other regulation, to make up for that difference.

Twelfthly. The pay of the first class petty-officers should be double the seamens' pay; second class one half more.

Thirteenthly. The warrant officers' widows' pensions should be restored.

These regulations, my Lord, I believe, would be sufficient to encourage men to serve; they could not be employed in the merchant service till their time was complete, and we all know that sailors cannot find employment on shore. Your Lordship will observe, that the plan I propose, would oblige every lad who entered the merchant service, to become a King's seaman for a certain number of years; I do not apprehend it would at all discourage boys from following a sailor's life—there would be no unjust compulsion, at least it would not appear so; and as all would be equally treated, none could complain; those who had served their time in a ship of war, would enjoy their pension, and feel themselves at ease in a merchant ship, and when too old to go to sea, would enjoy a competence amongst their friends; and their comfortable situation in their declining years, would render them grateful to their country, and be the means of making parents send their children to sea, as a certain means of procuring bread in their youth, and a comfortable retirement in their old age; and if the seaman's life was ameliorated when serving, I have no doubt but the time would come, when the naval service would become the pride, instead of the detestation of the lower orders.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Rowland Castle, May 1827.

To Capt. Charles Napier.

Sir, I ought to apologize to you for not having before answered your letter, but the fact is, I was so much occupied with the Finance Committee, that I had not time to reply to it, and I put it away, intending to answer it when the session of

Parliament had closed, and I entirely forgot it, till brought to my recollection by my brother.

The very circumstance which I have mentioned, will show you that my mind has not been turned with much attention to the subject of impressment; for if it had, I never could have forgotten the receipt of such a letter as yours. My principal object in saying what I did in the House of Commons, was to bring into notice a pamphlet written by Capt. Griffiths, which I had read with great pleasure, and which I thought might do good, if it could get a more general circulation. The principle on which he founds his system, is the same as yours, viz.: that the state has a right to claim the service of every man in the community for self-defence; that there is nothing unjust in giving notice to all men, that if they become sailors, they will be required to devote a portion of their seafaring life to the King's service; he, however, agreeing with you, since compulsion must be resorted to, to reserve the power of impressment, exempting only from it those who had served in a King's ship the stipulated term. I am afraid I must agree with him and with you, that the Navy could never be manned with the rapidity which is sometimes necessary, without some compulsory measures.

The question then is, whether impressment, mitigated as it undoubtedly would be by Captain Griffiths's proposals, or the enrolment of seamen which you propose, would be the least oppressive upon the sailors engaged in our mercantile marine. I should certainly myself think that your proposal is the best; but I must fairly say, that Sir George Cockburn, in giving his opinion, apparently with great candour, stated that he thought the French system of enrolment, which I suppose does not differ materially from yours, would be more oppressive and less palatable to the tastes of sailors, than our system of impressment, even in its present unmitigated severity. There appears to me also to be another advantage in the plan of a register, which is, that you will be able to treat all men alike; whereas, if you keep impressment, but wish to encourage volunteer service, you must necessarily give the volunteers some advantage over the pressed men. With respect to the encouragement which you propose to hold out, I think some of them very good; but I think the greatest inducement of volunteer service will be, that when a man has once experienced the superior comfort of a man-of-war to that of a merchantman,

he will generally be ready to sacrifice a certain amount of pay to obtain it; and if to this is added a pension for life after twenty years' service, I think there would not be any difficulty in manning our Navy with all the requisite quickness. I am not competent to speak on the details of your plan; they appear to me to be rather more complicated than would be necessary; but there can be no very great difficulty in making these arrangements; for as the system has been long at work in France, and I believe answers its purpose, we need only adopt the French regulations, improving them and adapting them to our own institutions where ever it may be necessary. As for a fixed enrolment being contrary to the spirit of the English constitution, it must be admitted that it undoubtedly is so; but in a country where impressment has existed so long, people must have minds of a very curious texture, to object to enrolment as an unconstitutional proposition.

I have written, as I was bound to do, and ought to have done long ago, my observations upon your letter. You will perceive that, as far as my information enables me to form an opinion, I approve greatly of your plan; but I must candidly say, that the question is one which requires much delicacy in managing, and which, while it runs counter to the prejudices of some, will have a tendency to influence the passions of so many more, in bringing it under discussion, that I have a very great disinclination to put myself forward upon it; if I saw any great prospect of doing good, I ought not to say this; but I really do not, because I believe that in Parliament there are very few who take the same view of impressment that I do; some are for abolishing all compulsory modes of manning the Navy, while the majority are for leaving things as they are; but I believe very few are for taking a middle course.

I will not say anything by way of apology for not having written before, because no apology I could make would be sufficient.

I have the honour to be,

SIR, your obedient servant,

ALTHORP.

December 17, 1829.

To the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

SIR, I have the honour of submitting to you, for the consideration of the Finance Committee, the propriety of recommending that Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham, and Sheerness, should be garrisoned by marines instead of soldiers.

There would be a considerable economy in employing that description of force; and on the breaking out of war, they would be disciplined and ready to embark on board their respective ships, and with the assistance of a few seamen, riggers, and pensioners, the fleet would be ready for sea, as soon as it could be manned.

This country, unlike the Continental Nations, has no necessity for an increase of her Army for her defence—her Navy is her bulwark; and on the celerity with which that Navy can take the sea, depends the advantages she will gain on the first onset. With a well-manned fleet, commanded by an experienced chief, and officered with young and enterprising men, full of the ardour and energy that a war would instil into them, half the enemies ports and commerce would be annihilated before their eyes were open.

In the success of such enterprises, when you carry fire and sword into the enemies' harbours, nothing is so necessary as a good body of well-disciplined marines; it will never do to trust to raw recruits.

According to the existing system, should war break out suddenly, we have neither seamen or marines to man the fleet; the first will be obtained by that vile means, the *impress*; for the latter we must have recourse to recruiting, and high bounties, to obtain a set of raw men who know nothing of their military duty, who never could learn it on board a ship-of-war—would be almost useless in fitting out a fleet, and who could not be expected to set an example of order and sobriety, so necessary in a ship where men are thrown hastily together, and by force. Such men would also be unfit for covering a retreat, or assisting the seamen on harassing enterprises on the enemy's coast; and no officer would be justified in attempting an enterprise with men who

would require the seamen to nurse them during their sea-sickness, and carry them in and out of the boats.

It is also probable that you will not be able to obtain a sufficient number of recruits, and the fleet must, in consequence, either be detained in Port, or detachments of the Army sent on board, who are unused to Naval discipline, totally unaccustomed to a ship of war, and useless for the services for which they would be required.

Were we to increase the marines, the army could be reduced in the same proportion; there would be no occasion for governors, lieutenant-governors, aid-de-camps, adjutant and quarter master generals, and all the paraphernalia of a garrisoned town; their duties would be done by the admirals and the marine officers in command of the divisions, without additional pay or allowance, and when war broke out, they would embark on board their respective ships, and the Militia would march into the garrison and do that duty, while the army would recruit at leisure.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Rowland Castle, June, 1827.

To the Lord High Admiral.

SIR, To render steam-boats fit for war requires a better combination of construction and arming than we seem to be aware of; and, as I understand there is a steam man-of-war of 700 tons to be laid down at Woolwich, I trust His Royal Highness the Lord High Admiral will not think it presumptuous in my stating my opinion on the subject. I have had a considerable degree of experience; but I do it with great diffidence, being well aware of the difficulty of the subject.

As it is uncertain whether the various experiments now trying will succeed, I shall base my opinions on the system of Bolton and Watt, and shall begin with the construction of my vessel, limiting myself to a steam corvette.

I should propose she should be thirty feet wide, one hundred and fifty feet long, and eighteen feet deep from the gun deck. She ought neither to be so fine as a man-of-war, nor on the other hand

have the capacity of an Indiaman. In the first case she would not stow a sufficient quantity of fuel, and would draw too much water for most purposes; in the latter case, she would not sail with sufficient rapidity. Her floor should not be quite flat, but nearly so, and its length one-half the vessel; the form of the bow and run would occupy the other half. I beg it fully to be understood, that I do not propose this as a vessel offering the least resistance, but as one combining the requisites necessary for a steam man-of-war; such a vessel, light, would draw less than four feet, and with her engines and boilers of 160-horse power, would not much exceed six feet, and would certainly be under seven, and with 500 tons of coals, would draw about twelve, having her gun six feet above the water at her greatest loading; she would consume twenty-two tons of coals a day, and if the coals are good, and great care, something less *.

Experience has proved beyond a doubt, that the fittest vessels for sea are those constructed according to the plan of the steam-boat at the Admiralty, and I should recommend the wheels not to be so broad as they usually are; such a vessel would certainly not go so fast in the Thames, but in rough weather, the wheels would always be under the command of the engines.

The Lord High Admiral has no doubt observed, that according to that plan it would be impossible for a man-of-war to keep her guns run out so many feet beyond her real breadth; they might be fought in that way in light winds it is true, but not even then without straining the ship.

I would therefore abandon entirely the system of broadside guns, and mount amidships as many heavy guns as the ship would bear; and as there was room, to place on pivots to point all round, as the privateers were wont to do in the West Indies, in addition to two bow and stern chasers, mounted in the usual way.

She should be rigged as a three-masted schooner, having top-sails, top-gallant-sails, &c. and all the necessary sails for common purposes, and which should be got down the moment it became necessary to steam in bad weather against the wind.

I have the honour to be,

Your Royal Highness' obedient servant,

Rowland Castle, July 1, 1827. CHARLES NAPIER.

* The consumption of coal is now very much reduced.

To the same.

SIR, The Naval service would be much better conducted, and at less expence, were the Admiralty and Navy Boards amalgamated, and the whole put under the control of the Lord High Admiral.

Without meaning any disrespect to the latter branch, I think the manner it is formed, is a certain means of insuring its inefficiency, and of preventing its profiting by the march of intellect, and indeed it is pretty generally allowed by the naval service, that they are the last to adopt any improvement, and most obstinately shut their eyes to whatever is proposed to them, believing that the whole naval talent of the country is centred in their own body.

The wise encouragement that the Admiralty have lately given to gentlemen unconnected with the Navy Board, to construct ships on certain conditions, has clearly proved that they are not possessed of absolute wisdom in ship building; and I shall endeavour to show your Royal Highness, that it is morally impossible from the manner they are composed, that they should be possessed of the shining qualities so necessary for the well-being of the naval service. Hitherto for a naval officer to obtain a seat at the Navy Board, it was necessary that he should have sufficient interest to be appointed to a Foreign dockyard, and after moving from one to another for a considerable number of years, he succeeded to the first vacant seat at Somerset House (provided none of the Commissioners of the home dockyards preferred moving), well versed no doubt in the business of a yard, and if not too old and too long out of active service, probably acquainted with the improvements and wants of the Navy: on taking his seat he finds himself placed amongst a set of old gentlemen (and perhaps a young statesman or two) who have been out of the sphere of naval improvement for the last twenty years, and who oppose all innovations and ameliorations he may wish to introduce; and he is at last obliged to give up the point, and gradually adopt all the ideas of Navy-board supremacy.

The office of Comptroller is generally bestowed on some man of interest, without taking much trouble about his qualifications*.

The Surveyors, on whom depend the goodness or badness of our ships, either are, or ought to be, chosen from their talents, but if I am to judge from what they have produced, such as the fir thirty-twos, and the twenty-two gun corvettes, neither of which *could either stand up under canvass or sail; the twenty-eight gun ships, who could neither fight nor run away; the forty thieves*, together with the bad sailing of the Navy in general, I should be inclined to estimate their abilities very low; the fault of constructing such classes lays with the Board of Admiralty, but their models with the Navy Board; and if they could not hit on a form of their own that would sail well, they ought to have been less bigoted, and copied from their neighbours.

All these gentlemen remain in their situations for life, or until they find themselves useless, which is never till many years after they are judged so by the rest of the world.

Commissioners of dockyards are really so very comfortable that no man in his senses will retire so long as he can hold together, and I believe they are not removable, except for some glaring misconduct. I confess I have no faith in any department being well conducted or greatly improved, when the main spring is allowed to wear itself out; it loses its elasticity, and becomes unfit to perform its functions.

The Naval Administration should be composed of a Lord High Admiral, Vice and Rear-Admiral of Great Britain (which situations should not be sinecures), a Captain of the fleet, Treasurer of the Navy, Surveyor, Physician of the fleet, Commissary, Store-Keeper-General, and Adjutant-General of Marines; all the Commissioners and lay Lords, should be abolished, the whole to be removable at the pleasure of the Lord High Admiral, and instead of retiring with large pensions, they should be put on half-pay, as the rest of the officers of the fleet now are.

The dockyards should be governed by an Admiral, with his flag flying, who should also superintend the equipment of the ships, so that there would be no clashing of duties, as there now is with the Commissioners†.

* Sir Byam Martin was an exception to this.

† This has been done.

When the Lord High Admiral found it inconvenient to visit the seaports and ships, the Vice or Rear-Admiral should be dispatched; they should hoist their flags, and for the time being command all others; but in general the presence of the Lord High Admiral would do more good; he should be accompanied by the Captain of the Fleet, to assist him in his inspections, and he should be the person to whom officers should address their claims, when it was inconvenient for the Lord High Admiral to receive them: he should be of easy access, a man of sound sense, no haughtiness of carriage, and one who would really look into the services of officers, and lay them before the Lord High Admiral, who, amongst the multiplicity of his duties, cannot always examine them himself. When the Navy was ruled by a Board, with a Cabinet Minister at its head, it was never his policy to examine into claims; he had too many friends of his own, and supporters of the Minister to provide for, to be able to attend to services; and though we were generally triumphant during the war, I attribute that a great deal more to other Navies being worse than our own, than to any excellence either in the management or discipline of ours; and we have only to look back to the American war, to know that we may meet an opponent as clever as ourselves; and that opponent is increasing his force and improving his tactics every year. It is evident, that under the rule of a civilian, who rarely visited the ships, and if he did, knew nothing about them, the same attention to order and discipline would not be paid by officers, that will be when ruled by a Lord High Admiral, who is frequently in the habit of inspecting them himself, and who has the power of giving an immediate reward to those who excelled all others; and, indeed, we already observe a wonderful change, and an attention to the fighting part of naval discipline that was shamefully neglected last war, and to which we may attribute all our disasters in America.

I know I may be told it was the duty of the Admirals to examine into the state of the ships of their fleet, but it was a duty I fear very seldom performed; and I fancy, during the year your Royal Highness has been at the head of the Navy, you have looked more closely into the discipline of the ships than was ever done before by any Admiral or Commander-in-Chief? I have never, in the course of my services, which have been pretty long, seen it done more than twice or three times, and the

ships were then at anchor; there was no exercising guns, no evolutions; and even if the Admirals had been more frequent in their inspections, they had no power of reward, though they had that of censure.

I have the honour to be,
Your Royal Highness's obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

October 1st, 1827.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty.

SIR, I believe it is generally thought, that the invention of steam navigation will be injurious to the interests of this country, and hurtful to our naval superiority; and the Government seem to be of that opinion, by the little attention they have bestowed on it.

I am inclined to think, that so far from diminishing our naval superiority, it only required that invention to make it more triumphant than ever, and at the same time diminish the expences of war; and I shall endeavour, as concisely as I can, to point out to you, for the information of the Lord High Admiral, my reasons for entertaining such an opinion.

In the first place—the danger and expence of blockading will be at an end, and it will only be necessary to keep a few steam vessels, in addition to frigates, off an enemy's coast to watch their motions, and who, in almost any weather, and in a given time, can convey intelligence of their motions.

Secondly.—If an enemy's fleet is once got sight of, an action is inevitable; a steam vessel would be dispatched to keep sight of them; and others, in the event of light winds and calms, would tow our ships up to attack their rear, and thereby bring on a general action.

Greatheaume's squadron would never have escaped from Sir John Warren in the Mediterranean, Jerome Buonaparte from Sir John Duckworth, or the two sail of the line from Sir Alexander Cochrane in the West Indies, had there been a couple of steam vessels in company. When the enemy were attacked at Trafalgar in two lines, several of our rear ships never got into action; had steam been in use, they would have been towed up, and probably

not a ship would have escaped; and after the action the disabled ships would have been taken out to sea, and the greater part saved. Should a disabled ship drop out of action, she would now be able to regain her station.

Thirdly.— The enemy will find no safety in their outer roads. In Toulon, for instance, they could not only be attacked by fire ships, but with a sufficient number of steamers a fleet might be towed in against a moderate breeze, and when they had done their work would have a fair wind to retreat. No enemy's port is invulnerable with a fair wind in and out, and steamers make the wind always fair; and once alongside the enemy, batteries are useless.

Had Lord Nelson been defeated at Copenhagen, or Lord Exmouth at Algiers, their squadrons would have been lost, unless favoured by wind in their retreat; and had Sir James Saumarez been assisted by steam when the wind failed at Alguseiras, instead of losing the Hannibal, he would have captured the French squadron.

In short, steam has gained such a complete conquest over the elements, it appears to me that we are now in possession of all that was required to make maritime war perfect, and such a field is open to the enterprise of officers and seamen, that I know of no place an enemy will be safe in, except their inner harbours, or, probably, in their basins, until a new system of defence is adopted, and if we are prepared at the beginning of a war, they will be nearly annihilated before they find out that the old system is imperfect.

Fourthly.—Landing troops on an enemy's coast will be attended with no danger, as they will be put on shore and re-embarked under cover of steam boats drawing little more than three feet, built expressly for that purpose.

Fifthly.—Nothing but a strong breeze right into a harbour can prevent a fleet putting to sea. Formerly fleets were detained many days in port after the enemy had sailed; and I forget how many days Lord Nelson lost by not being able to get through the Gut of Gibraltar.

Had Sir James Gordon been assisted by steam up the Potomac, we should have done more in one day than was done in ten by warping, and the Army from Washington could have retired by the right bank of the river, and laid the whole country under contribution.

The above, Sir, is a specimen of the advantages we shall gain by steam. It is now proper to examine what are the advantages the enemy is likely to draw from it.

Firstly.—We must calculate that they will have numerous steam privateers in all the ports on the north coast of France. We must meet them with the same arm; and when I consider the great expence of steam, and the liability of the engines to get out of order, I am certain that a few unsuccessful cruizes, with a few accidents, will put an end to that danger.

Secondly.—Should our ships be becalmed off an enemy's coast, we may expect worse punishment than we occasionally got in the Gut of Gibraltar and in the Baltic from the enemy's gun boats, unless our ships are provided with paddles, which will enable us to put steam vessels at defiance.

Should we be at war with America, it will be impossible to enter their great rivers, or, indeed, approach their coast, in fine weather, if unsupported by steam vessels. In the event of war with any of the northern powers, a large steam fleet will be indispensable for the protection of our trade.

Lastly.—The most important point to examine is, whether in the event of invasion, the enemy will be the gainer by the invention of steam. Should they build a large number of vessels for that purpose, it is evident we must build for our defence*. An action at sea will then appoach nearer to a land fight, and I hope the superiority of our sea tactics, assisted by those of land, combined with the excellence of our machinery and the innate bravery of our officers and seamen, if well experienced and on their own element, will always give us the advantage. The superiority of our machinery, and the genius of our engineers for its improvement, is far beyond most other nations: our coals are also better, so that we have already three essentials; but our officers are entirely ignorant of steam vessels and machinery. It is indispensably necessary, that not only the Captain, but all the officers should have a competent knowledge of the steam engine. In action a Lieutenant ought to be stationed in the engine-room, with active clever men ready at a moment's notice to back or

* They have built a large number of vessels for that purpose, and we have not a sufficient number of large ones for our defence. We beat them in corvettes, for so I call the Dragon's class; but we want many more frigates, and the sooner we get them the better.

advance the engine, with an enterprising Captain, and the engines well attended, if a position is taken up across an enemy's stern, he would never be able to disengage himself; but through want of coolness, or celerity to work the engines, the advantages would be in a moment lost*.

I have paid a good deal of attention to steam navigation for these some years past. I feel satisfied that in another war, steam will become to the Navy, what the Cavalry is to the Army—it will be the post of honour, and I feel anxious to be thoroughly acquainted with that arm of war, and I should feel highly flattered, should it be the intention of his Royal Highness to put any of the steam vessels we now have on the establishment of men-of-war, if he would entrust me with the command of them; with a little more experience than I now have, I should be able to suggest several improvements, to render these vessels fit for any service.

I have the honour to remain,
Your most obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

October 6, 1827.

*** *To this I only received the acknowledgment of the receipt.*

To the same.

SIR, I had the honour, some time ago, of pointing out to you, for the information of the Lord High Admiral, the advantages that the Naval power of this country would reap, from the invention of steam navigation, and the necessity of educating Officers in the steam-boats we now have.

I have now the honour of submitting to you, for the consideration of the Lord High Admiral, the great advantage of employing that arm, in repressing the piracies in the Grecian Archipelago. Five or six steam-boats would be of more use for that purpose,

* Our officers are now studying steam.

than almost any number of men-of-war, and no pirate, ever so small, could have the smallest chance of escape*.

I have been examining the Government steam-boats now at Woolwich, and although they are not exactly what I would choose for that purpose, there is sufficient room between the boilers, engines, and the boat's side, to render them proof against any shot they would meet with there. It has been proved, that a combination of oak timber, iron plates, bales of linen, cotton, or reams of paper, four feet thick, will protect the boilers and engines against an eighteen pound shot, and without that protection, a steam-boat is entirely useless in war.

The wheels must, of course, be exposed; but if the naves†, which are now of cast, were made of wrought-iron, and the arms of the wheels connected with boiler-plates, it would require many shots to disable them.

The main shaft would then be the only vulnerable part, and if the guards, which support it, are considerably rounded, or indeed made like a cuirass, and covered with plate-iron, it would turn off any shot; with these precautions, wheels would be less subject to accidents, than either masts or yards, and I would stake my professional character, with half-a-dozen vessels, fitted as I propose, in six months to put a final termination to piracy.

I have the honour to be,

Your most obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Rowland Castle, Nov. 10th 1827.

To the same.

SIR, It has always appeared to me extraordinary, that no attempt has been made (with the exception of the trial in the Active) to make use of the strength of the ship's company, in propelling ships in calm weather. Brigs and corvettes are furnished with sweeps, it is true, and with great practice and great labour two knots can be obtained in a calm; and I remember when I

* Had we employed nothing but steamers, and fast steamers, on the coast of Africa, the slave trade would have been put down long ago.

† The naves in the Sidon are of wrought iron, and her boilers are below the water line.

commanded the Thames in the Mediterranean, I could get along at the rate of a knot and a half; but when sweeps come to a great size, they are very unwieldly, and extremely fatiguing to the crew, and much power is lost in putting them in and taking them out of the water. Long before steam was successfully applied to vessels, I was of opinion that wheels could be much more easily and usefully employed in a ship than sweeps, and indeed I made some experiments in boats.

The application of steam, of bullocks and of horses, to propel vessels by means of wheels sufficiently proves that the power of men, when a sufficient number are in the ship, might be used with the same effect; and indeed it is a reproach on our profession, that, in a calm, a line-of-battle ship and a frigate is immoveable, or nearly so, and a brig can only be got along with great labour; and if an enemy is got sight of in a calm, the energies of a fine ship's company are completely paralyzed.

I hope to be able to show your Royal Highness, that it is really for want of trying, and not for want of means (for a ship has it within herself) that our brigs and corvettes, for I will limit myself to them for the present, are not got along at the rate of from three to four knots an hour in calm weather, without more exertion than rowing in a boat.

An engine of 100-horse-power in a calm, would propel a brig eight miles an hour, or nearly so; to propel her four knots, would not, however, require more than a 13 or 14-horse-power; now a brig's crew, consisting of 100 stout men, is equal to a 20-horse-power; it is therefore evident, that, allowing for the irregularity of these exertions, they would be at least equal to a 14-horse-power for a certain time, and half the number to a 7-horse-power, which would propel her nearly three knots.

Your Royal Highness has, no doubt, observed in a steam boat, how few turns of the wheel are required to propel a vessel three knots; now whether the turn of the wheel is obtained by steam, or the power of the ship's company, is quite immaterial.

The question is, how to employ these men with the least incumbrance to the vessel, and the least fatigue to the crew; the capstan was employed in the Active, but neither can the whole of the ship's company lay into the bars, nor can those who lay in, be used to the best advantage; besides, there is not only the fatigue of employing their strength, but there is also that of con-

stantly walking; I should, therefore, abandon it entirely, and fit on the stern of my vessel davits, to carry a paddle-wheel; these davits should either be fixtures, or made to rig in, as experience should prove most commodious; the arms of the paddle-wheel should be made either to unship, or fold up in a very few minutes; on the shaft there should be a large bevil-wheel, two smaller ones at the end of two short horizontal shafts should work into them a few feet from the stern of the vessel, and a set of winches running the whole length of the vessel on both sides should fit into them. The ship's company would then lay in as at the pumps, and heave round, and I am much mistaken if she did not go along four knots.

Three years ago, I proposed to Lord Melville to take the whole risk and expence on myself in fitting a vessel, but his Lordship did not favour me with a reply. I cannot make the same proposal to your Royal Highness, because my circumstances are changed; but I shall have no objection, if it does not succeed, to have an annual deduction made from my pay, till the Government are reimbursed*.

I have the honour to be,
Your most obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

Rowland Castle, January 1, 1828.

*** *This was not accepted.*

To the same.

Sir, There is a very simple means of getting rid of the dry rot in our men-of-war, and of preventing the enormous expense of their repair, by constructing ships of war of iron, in lieu of timber. The proposal may, perhaps, appear ridiculous, but experience has proved that it is perfectly possible not only to construct an iron ship, but that that ship will float lighter; but what is still more extraordinary, the iron does not deterio-

* I was afterwards permitted to fit the Galatea with paddles, and she went three knots and three fathoms an hour.

rate when exposed to fresh and salt water, nor from being aground and exposed to the action of the air.

Upwards of eight years ago, Mr. Manby, lately of Birmingham, and myself, constructed an iron steam vessel of one hundred feet long, seventeen feet broad, and eight feet deep. She was followed by four others, of one hundred and twenty feet long, eighteen feet six inches broad, and eight-feet hold. These vessels have been running ever since on the river Seine, and have never cost a sixpence for repairs; and last year the boilers and engines were taken out of the two oldest, and the iron under them was found perfectly sound, although it was impossible to apply a coating of tar, the only preservative that has been used.

These vessels have been run aground on shoals and stones; have been at sea in all weathers, going in and out of Havre; have been knocked against bridges in all direction; and, notwithstanding their great length, their narrowness, and little depth of hold, they have never changed their form in the least degree. The wooden boats, on the contrary, in the same river, exposed to lying on uneven ground with full cargoes, have invariably hogged.

The iron of their bottoms (which are flat), and the first streak, is three-eighths of an inch thick, and the upper works one quarter. The ends of the plates are laid together and rivetted inside to a narrow plate, and they are clinker built; the rivet heads counter-sunk, leaving the outer surface perfectly smooth. Their timbers are of angular iron, and rivetted to the sides, about eighteen inches apart. The stem was formed by a plate, and the plates at the stern rivetted to the stern-post. The first had iron beams to support the deck: in the others I proposed wood. The expence of the boat and two twenty-five-horse engines was £4000.

Before I propose to Your Royal Highness to construct a brig of iron, it is proper I should state the disadvantages, and what I should think would be necessary to overcome them.

Between wind and water she should be doubled inside with timber, as a shot passing through iron, would leave a hole considerably larger, and more difficult to stop, than passing through timber*.

* Though I proposed one, I should not have advised thirty-three to be built without a trial.

The part above water should be filled in with cork, or some other non-conductor, to prevent the heat in summer, and the cold in winter.

I am not prepared to say what should be the thickness of iron necessary for an eighteen-gun-brig, but I should think three-quarters of an inch would be fully sufficient; but if Your Royal Highness should think of trying it, that could be easily settled with the men who constructed the iron boats I have described.

I have the honour to be,

Your Royal Highness' most obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Rowland Castle, June 25, 1828.

To the same.

SIR, During last war the great superiority of our tactics over those of our enemy, accounts in some measure for the little improvement made in the construction of our ships of war: a long peace has enabled other powers to ameliorate the discipline of their Navies, and a Marine is springing up in the Western Hemisphere that will require all our talents and energy to keep in check.

With the exception of continuing the construction of frigates of twenty-eight guns, a class of vessels infinitely inferior, in every respect, to corvettes mounting long guns, who, from the superiority of their sailing, could choose their distance, and unrig them with impunity, we have wisely followed the example of the French and Americans, and built in addition to our frigates of forty-two and forty-six guns, a considerable number carrying twenty-four and thirty-two pounders, who will take the place of the small ships on two decks, and be more effective for general purposes; but, except in increasing the size, we do not appear to have improved the plan of our ships of the line.

It appears to me, that after bringing our frigates to the largest size that can be done without destroying their qualities as sea boats, our ships on two decks should be of such dimensions as to render them fit to fight their lower deck guns, and keep them out in almost any weather; their crews should not sleep or mess on the lower gun deck, but have accommodations for them between

the lower and orlop decks, keeping the ship nearly clear for action at all times.

At night our line-of-battle ships are lumbered with hammocks, chests, bags, tables, stools, &c., the guns run in never shotted, and not always loaded; one half of the main deck occupied by the officers' cabins and sick berth, which take much time to clear away in daylight, and so much more at night, that I know of no position more awkward that a blockading fleet could be placed in, than being suddenly attacked by an enterprising enemy, putting to sea on a dark night ready for action; a heavy frigate at night, for the same reason, would disable a line-of-battle ship before she could be got ready for action, were that frigate capable of throwing in her first three broadsides within a minute, as I have seen last war. I confess I should have been sorry to have seen the experiment tried between one of the large American frigates and some of our line-of-battle ships.

I beg most respectfully to submit, for the consideration of your Royal Highness, whether it would not be advisable to alter our system in the three large two-decked ships I observe we are now building. I should recommend them to be five feet longer than the Nelson, the largest first-rate we now have, and four feet lower, no poop, but a double set of windows and galleries. The orlop deck should be lowered two feet; and as the beams of the lower deck would be much slighter, having no guns to carry, it would admit of being lowered four (still leaving six feet for the cables and stores), and devoted entirely to the accommodation of the ship's company; the main and middle decks would in consequence be four feet lower, and become the main and lower gun decks, having the cells of the ports about ten feet above the water; they should mount one hundred 32-pounders, and be distributed according to the following table, showing also the distribution of the Nelson's guns.

Ships proposed.		Nelson.	
Lower gun deck	34..32-prs.	Lower gun deck	32..32-prs.
Main deck	36..32-prs.	Middle deck	34..24-prs.
Quarter deck and forecastle	30..32-prs.	Main deck	34..24-prs.
		Quarter deck and forecastle	12..32-prs. 8..12-prs.
	100		120
Weight of broadside	3200-lbs.	Weight of broadside	2752-lbs.

The five feet additional length would be sufficient for the guns on the lower and main decks, and the quarter and forecastle guns should encroach on the gangways; the length, together with the foot of real breadth gained on the Nelson, would make up for the stowage lost in the hold by the sinking the orlop deck; the weight of the four feet of upper works taken away, together with the twenty guns, would do more than compensate for the additional weight of metal, without taking into account the poop which I would suppress.

A ship of this description would sit much snugger in the water, and in consequence sail better than a three-decker would—have a magnificent quarter-deck, would be equal to her in action in all weathers, and in bad weather far superior; she would be ready for action in half the time, and would stow the ship's company with all the comfort of a frigate*.

I have the honour to be,
Your Royal Highness' most obedient humble servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

July 1, 1828.

To Sir Charles Napier.

MY DEAR NAPIER, His Royal Highness has determined for the present to cease building any more experimental ships, but he has given your plan to Sir Byam Martin.

He will not see officers just now, being very much engaged.

Yours truly,
ROBERT SPENSER.

Royal George Yacht, July 15, 1828.

To the Right Honourable Lord Melville.

MY LORD, Since writing to your Lordship on the subject of allowing Captains of a certain age and standing to retire on the superannuated list of Admirals, I have reconsidered the

* The Prince Regent, commanded by Captain Martin, is partially fitted in this way.

subject with much attention, and I have now the honour of laying before your Lordship what appears to me unexceptionable in all its parts, inasmuch as it will greatly accelerate the promotion to Flags of eligible Captains, without increasing the expences of the country, or doing any manifest injustice to individuals.

Should the present system continue, and war break out, one of three things must happen, either the Flag list will very soon increase to 300, or the line-of-battle ships will be commanded by old and inefficient men, or the Admiralty must go down the list to young men, and leave the old ones unemployed.

I believe, my Lord, I do not exaggerate, when I state, that of the first 200 Captains, there are 150 sixty years of age, or thereabouts, many of whom having served little, are only eligible for the retired list; but a considerable number, according to the existing regulations, must come to their Flags.

I will suppose the first Flag promotion, in the event of war, to include Sir Charles Dashwood, who stands fifty-two from the top; from ten to fifteen of these will be placed on the retired list; of the next 148, your Lordship would not find seventy-five fit for active service; fifty of the remainder have hardly served, and the remainder are too old.

Taking the Flag list at 200, and the retired list at thirty, which has been nearly the average since the peace, the expence to the country is £130,000 in round numbers.

If your Lordship would allow the Flag list to decrease to 150, and the retired list to increase to 100, the expence would be as follows:—

40	Admirals	£30,660
50	Vice-Admirals	28,693
60	Rear-Admirals	27,375
100	Superannuated Admirals	45,625
		£132,253

being only £3: 5s 3d more than the present estimate.

This regulation would provide a retirement by their own consent for seventy Captains, too old to command line-of-battle ships with effect, and who must in the end either be promoted in war, at a greater expence to the country, or if promotion does not take place, must have the mortification of being refused employment.

With such an arrangement, there would be no difficulty in keeping the Flag-list under 200 during the war, and still have young Admirals to command the fleets, and men taken direct from the line-of-battle ships, instead of from the half-pay list, which must be the case if promotion continues during peace. There are at present forty-eight full Admirals, sixty-five Vice-Admirals, and sixty-eight Rear-Admirals; the pay of a full Admiral is £776: 10s., a Vice-Admiral £574: 17s. 6d., and a superannuated Admiral £456: 5s. For every four Admirals and Vice-Admirals that die, I propose to allow six Captains, within 100 of the top of the list, and sixty years of age, who have served their rated time, to retire on the superannuated list of Admirals, until they are reduced to the number I have proposed; they should then be filled up by the Rear-Admirals.

When the Rear-Admirals' list is reduced to sixty, either by death or promotion, each vacancy should be filled up by the senior Captain eligible; those who were not eligible, should be put on the retired list, till it amounted to 100; they should then remain at the head of the Captains' list till vacancies occurred; but should a vacancy take place on the retired list, it should be given to the senior Captain who was not eligible for the active flag, leaving the senior eligible Captain at the head of the list till a vacancy occurred on the Admirals' list, unless he thought proper to take the retirement.

I have honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

September 1st, 1828.

To his Grace the Duke of Wellington.

My Lord Duke, It might have been supposed that your Grace, who was educated in the Army, and through its means and your own talents have risen to the highest rank in the state, would have had some feeling for the profession of your brothers in arms, and have broken through the abominable custom of ruling the Navy by a board with a civilian at its head, who can know nothing of the naval service, or be a judge of the merits of naval officers, on whom depend the safety of the country.

The First Lord of the Admiralty, the Lord High Admiral, or whatever name your Grace chooses to give him, should be a professional man, who can hear with his own ears, and see with his own eyes, who has seen service, and knows the service, and unto whom, officers who have distinguished themselves, could go fearlessly and state their claims, with a certainty of their being examined into, and rewarded, instead of going cap in hand to a heartless cabinet minister, who can form no idea what the service is, and who cannot judge of officers' services, even if he takes the trouble to inquire into them, which, from the numerous applications from his political friends, it is more than probable he will not do, but must address himself to the first sea Lord, who, having few opportunities of providing for his own friends, is very shy of looking into the services of other officers.

If your Grace wishes for patronage to carry on the Government, why do you not put your own service, and the Ordnance, into commission, with civilians and cabinet ministers at their head? They are of less importance to the safety of the country than the Navy, on which the very existence of the country depends.

No, my Lord Duke, you love your own profession too well to let it fall into decay; but just as the naval service was beginning to recover from the debasement in which it has been for many years, on the resignation of the Lord High Admiral, you have again put it under the same civilian, under whom our disasters in America began. There may have been political reasons against keeping the Heir Presumptive of the Crown at the head of the Navy, but there can be none against placing an Admiral there, or even putting him in the cabinet, should it be necessary; the service will never be properly conducted, as long as the minister has so much power over the promotion of the Navy.

I have the honour to remain,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

A POST CAPTAIN.

Oct. 13, 1828.

To the Right Honourable Viscount Melville.

My Lord, His Majesty's order in council, of the 30th of June 1827, directs that no Captain shall be entitled to promo-

tion as Flag Officer, who has not commanded a rated ship for four years during war, six years during peace, and four during peace and war. Such order will, no doubt, diminish the active list, and increase the retired, which, however, will be less expensive to the country.

I beg to suggest to your Lordship, that in time of peace, instead of making flag promotions, were your Lordship to allow ten Captains within one hundred of the top of the list, sixty years of age, and who had served their rated time, to retire on the superannuated list of Admirals, you would get rid, by their own consent, of men too old to command line-of-battle ships with effect. When war broke out, and a promotion took place, those who had not served their time, would, agreeable to the order, be passed over, and none would be placed on the active list, except young men fit for service.

Your Lordship will, no doubt, observe, that there would be a considerable economy in such a measure, as there is no increase of pay in the superannuated list.

If your Lordship will cast your eye over the list, you will find from thirty to forty out of the first 100 who will now be passed over for want of service. I think I could lay my hand on about thirty men, who, from their age and other causes, would be glad to retire; but in the event of war, when there must be frequent promotions, they would of course prefer the Active Flag. The above idea occurred to me on reflecting on the serious consequences that might happen to our fleet if commanded by men too far advanced in life, which must be the case even with the most fortunate of the profession, if something is not done to draw off the list; and I know of no plan, except the one I have the honour of proposing, that will not be attended with expence to the country. I remain, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

October 23, 1828.

To the Editor of the Naval and Military Gazette.

Sir, There are various opinions about the circular sterns of Sir Robert Seppings; many object to them on account

of their appearance, while others, of which I am of the number, have more substantial reasons for disapproving of them in their present state.

In the first place, the rudder is too much exposed; in the second place, the ship is deprived of her counter, which I have always considered a very necessary part of her, and which one would suppose the very derivation of the word, from the French word *contre* (against), sufficiently proves the utility of. I believe there are few sailors who have not heard the expression of "What a devil of a sea has struck her under the counter!" Now I apprehend, without that projection, the sea would come in at the cabin windows; and lastly, the whole of the gingerbread outside of the ship, would be blown away when the guns were much used.

I do not at all blame Sir Robert Seppings for exercising his ingenuity in improving the stern-frames of our ships, which were certainly their weakest part, though I never heard many complaints against them; and I recollect it was always a quiz against the Duke of Bolton, who, wishing to come into port, made an excuse that his stern-frame was loose, when, in all probability, he only wanted to set his bobstays up.

The Dutch ship-builders appear to have been wiser than Sir Robert Seppings, for, in all their vessels with round sterns, they took care to make allowance for the want of the counter, and raised their sterns, and consequently their cabin windows, considerably higher than vessels built in the usual way, as this could not be done in a man-of-war, without making the after-guns useless. Sir Robert Seppings ought not to have recommended their plan, and the Admiralty, some of whom are seamen, ought not to have adopted it; but I believe the truth is, the inconvenience was never thought of, until half the Navy was cut and carved into round sterns; and to make up for the want of counter, a false counter was clapt on, as a plea to make the ships look better, and the Captains more comfortable; but in reality as a substitute for the old counter: this served as a foundation for the quarter-galleries and cabin windows, and in some measure covered the rudder.

It is not however clear that the want of counter is sufficiently remedied; and I fear when our ships are constantly at sea in all weathers, the defect will be found out when too late to remedy it.

The impolicy of showing the enemy how to arm their sterns, which was generally the first part presented to our view, rests with the Admiralty and the seamen at the Navy Board. We have always been the attacking party (and God help the country when we cease to be so!) and our attention ought to have been turned to the bow instead of stern, and devised some means of bringing as many guns forward as possible*.

Though it is now too late to retrograde, it is not so to improve; and I am glad to see the round stern of Laing, of Blake, and of Roberts, for they all claim it, is at last coming into use. There the rudder is covered, the counter preserved, the appearance of the ship improved, and no gingerbread work to be destroyed either outside or in.

I have the honour to remain,
Your Lordship's obedient servant,
A POST CAPTAIN.

November 1, 1828.

To the Right Honourable Viscount Melville.

My Lord, When I had the honour of an interview, a few days ago, with your Lordship, I left the copy of a letter I had written to the Lord High Admiral, on the subject of steam boats. It is one to which I have paid much attention for these ten years past, and in which I have had a considerable deal of practical experience.

The importance of the subject does not seem to be sufficiently appreciated in this country. It is, however, engrossing the whole attention of our neighbours over the water, and they are making rapid strides in the fitting and arming steam men-of-war.

I am not one of those who think that steam is to entirely change the system of war, and render our Navy useless; on the contrary, I am most decidedly of opinion, that its invention will make the Navy more triumphant than ever, and open an extensive field to the enterprise of our officers; but, my Lord, it is necessary that some of our superior officers should be practised in these

* This Mr. Blake did in the Vindictive, and she was sent up the harbour out of sight for ten years.

vessels. In action a Lieutenant must be stationed in the engine-room, and must be able himself to work the machinery; it will never do to trust to inexperienced men.

Should war overtake us suddenly, we shall be inferior in practice to the French, and experience is not gained in a day. The vessels we have built are not equal to theirs, and from various conversations I have had, I plainly perceive that the system is not sufficiently understood at the Navy Board.

I have repeatedly written to the Admiralty and Navy Boards, pointing out the necessity of carrying a large quantity of fuel in the Dee, now building, and securing her engines and boilers against shot; but they do not seem to be aware of the necessity of either the one or the other. I mentioned to your Lordship, that the Lightning was fitted as a yacht; it is probable she will he much employed. If your Lordship would honour me with the command of her, I should not only have an opportunity of acquiring more experience myself, but also of bringing up young men for that service, and of superintending all our steam boats in the river, as well as the construction and arming of the Dee.

I believe, my Lord, I may safely say, that the expence of such an appointment would be soon saved by the economy that such a superintendence would occasion in these expensive vessels*.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Dec. 1, 1828.

* *Refused.*

To the Editor of the Hampshire Telegraph.

Mr. EDITOR, The complete failure of the Alert will now, it is to be hoped, convince the Admiralty, that cutter brigs were never intended for ships, and had they taken the trouble to inquire, they might have found out that the Osprey and Snake, which were tried as ships twenty years ago, never had the qualities of brigs; or if that was not sufficient proof, it would have been more prudent to have tried one or two before they put the country to the expence of spoiling the best class of vessels in the Navy.*

* I believe a dozen of them were converted before one was tried.

I never yet heard an Officer who had commanded an eighteen-gun brig, speak in other terms than praise of them; and I believe no officer has spoke well of them since they have been made into ships. That a ship is better in action than a brig there is no doubt, and a brig, for the same reason, is better than a cutter; but if we build small vessels we must adapt their rig to their construction, and there is no better reason for sticking a third mast into a brig, than there would be in putting a fourth mast into a ship, which might be necessary in a very long one, but would be useless in a short one.

Each Board of Admiralty, for the last twenty years, have had their building mania, and their productions have been so bad that they have been the laughing stock of every class of naval officers. In the late Lord Melville's administration there was half-a-dozen fir frigates built, and they neither sailed or stood up under canvass; they were followed by a set of twenty-two gun frigates, now the twenty-eights, and for what purpose they were built, God only knows, for they neither could fight or run away, as was exemplified by two being taken by the Constitution.

Mr. Yorke's administration produced a set of corvettes longer than the men-of-war brigs, and a few feet narrower, none of which answered as might have been expected, and they were sold out of the service; then followed the Forty Thieves, a small class of seventy-fours, of which more by-and-by. The rage now is building experimental ships, and if done with judgment, and a proper class of vessels, it is most praiseworthy. I do not think there is any objection to the corvettes, except their being more expensive, without being of more force, than an eighteen-gun brig; but if their sailing and other qualities are superior, they are preferable to a brig, and well worth the additional expense. The Columbine is indeed a sweet vessel, the regular American clipper, and does infinite credit to Captain Symonds who constructed her.

It is astonishing that all other nations build not only better vessels, but a better class of vessels than we do, and if we have not ingenuity enough to lead, we ought, at least, to follow their example. We have wisely abandoned the construction of small frigates, except the twenty-eight's; as I have before observed, I cannot see their use; if any thing between the eighteen-gun brig and forty-two-gun frigate is necessary, which there is no doubt of, why do we not build fine corvettes, to mount twelve

guns of a side on a flush deck? It is impossible that a small frigate, requiring all the top hamper of a large one, can sail so well as a corvette (which is so much lower), particularly on a wind; it is also very impolitic, for, should one of our twenty-eights be captured by a corvette, mounting twenty-four guns on a flush deck, which is possible, it goes abroad to the world, that a corvette has taken an English frigate, and the size of that frigate is industriously concealed. If one of our small frigates, mounting carronades, should fall in with an American or French corvette that sails better (which is almost certain), and mounts long guns, the frigate must inevitably be taken, the Captain dishonoured, and our naval character hurt, because the enemy would profit by his superiority of sailing, and choose his distance, and we all know that long guns are fired with more precision than carronades. Should the experimental corvettes, now mounting eighteen guns, be found to sail better than an experimental brig of the same tonnage, it would be as well to continue them, but I am much inclined to think a good brig, of the same tonnage, would have the superiority; advantage would no doubt be taken by an enemy, if a corvette was captured by a brig of the same dimensions; but the effect on the world would not be the same, as it is generally known that a corvette, as well as a brig, has only one gun deck.

I would therefore strongly recommend all the twenty-eights, now in the service, to be made corvettes, leaving part of the quarter deck for a poop, as well as part of the forecastle; and in all corvettes built in future, the Captain should be accommodated on deck, which would not only make them more comfortable, but give greater room below*.

Whether the cutting down to frigates the Forty Thieves, as they are called, is a good measure, is much to be doubted; we all know, last war, that the Anson, Magnanime, and Indefatigable, never made good frigates; they were notorious for rolling; the old song used to say—

> Oh, the saucy Phæton, and oh, the flying Stag—
> Oh, the happy Doris, and oh, the rolling Mag!

These now cut down are more expensive, because they are

* The Tweed was cut down to a corvette and was much improved, but it was not persevered with.

taken to pieces from the mizen chains, and regular frigate stern put on them, which no doubt improves their look, but will no improve their qualities.

It is said the Barham answers well—but in what gales of wind has she been tried? coming round from Chatham to Plymouth was surely no trial; and though she may sail well, she may be a bad sea boat, and laying at Jamaica will not prove her a good one; but, nevertheless, we go on cutting down a dozen more, at an enormous expense, without being certain of their success.

I know they are considered to carry their guns a foot too low, both for fighting and for stowage, for when the men are put on the orlop deck, and a new orlop deck made, it is very evident the stowage must be bad, as they require the same stores as formerly, and only carry 100 men less. If the decks are risen, the expense will be enormously increased, and still it is not certain they will be good frigates.

It is said they are useless as seventy-fours. I do not mean to say they are good ships, but I never knew any thing particularly against them; and if too small to go into the line, now that our enemy are building larger ships, would it not have been better to wear some out in peace, and keep the rest for troop ships*.

I remain, your obedient servant,

A POST CAPTAIN.

January 1st, 1829.

To the Right Honourable Sir James Graham.

Sir, Although a stranger, I trust Sir James Graham will permit me to congratulate him on assuming the duties of First Lord of the Admiralty, and to assure him, that all officers who have any regard for the service, look forward with great confidence to so independant a man being of incalculable benefit to the Navy.

It may be unusual for so humble an individual as myself to write as I am about to do, to a First Lord of the Admiralty, particularly when he is surrounded by such experienced officers as

* One has been made a trooper, and four converted into screw steamers.

Sir Thomas Hardy, Admiral Dundas, and Sir John Pechell, yet, persuaded as I am, that the Navy has been for some time going fast to decay, I should not be doing my duty, were I not to point out what appears to me the cause of the decline, and the remedies necessary to bring it into a more healthy state.

Men high in office, I know, are apt to feel offended at officers presuming even to think that anything can be wrong in the department over which they preside; and certainly I should not have ventured to write so plainly to Lord Melville as I intend doing to you.

Things are however changed—ideas more liberal are afloat, and your declaration to your constituents, that you would never sacrifice the patronage of the Navy to political purposes, but would bring forward unobtrusive merit wherever you found it, is a sufficient guarantee to me, that you will attribute my motive to a sincere desire to benefit the service, and to make known to you some of its defects, of which, from your situation, you must be ignorant, and from the very nature of your office, not always certain of hearing the truth.

Some time before Lord Althorp came into office, I wrote to him on the subject of impressment, and he did me the honour of replying very fully in approval of most of the suggestions I made to him; and if it has not slipped his memory, it is not improbable he may have communicated the subject to you.

No man who has any regard for his country, can view the present state of Europe with indifference; no man can tell how long we may be allowed to remain at peace; and no Naval officer who served during the war, and has been employed since, can look forward to a struggle with perfect confidence.

The Navies of other countries have been advancing in their knowledge and discipline, in about the same proportion we have been retrograding; and when I remember, that out of eight frigate-actions, all well fought, in the last war, four terminated in drawn battles, I can assure you, that with the experience our late opponents have acquired, we have not a very pleasing prospect before us.

You may, perhaps, have seen how Lord Collingwood complained, in his letters, of ships of the line not having more than two or three officers who knew any thing of their duty; but, in

the present day, should there be one besides the Master, a Captain may consider himself fortunate.

The generality of officers, instead of feeling a pleasure in carrying on the duty with smartness and alacrity, and encouraging the men to excel, consider it quite a task to keep their watch; they have neither zeal nor energy, and as for seamanship, they know nothing about it: should a ship be taken in a squall, unless the Captain and First-Lieutenant sleep with their eyes open, she must inevitably be dismasted; all they think about is dancing about on shore as much as they can, and playing with the midshipmen when the Captain and First-Lieutenant's backs are turned.

At present, Sir, there is a laxity of discipline, and a feeling of equality, ruinous to the service, pervading all classes of officers. A Lieutenant formerly was bred up to treat his Captain with more respect than can now be obtained from a Midshipman, and a reproof from him, now-a-days little cared for, was once of some avail. It is impossible to bring officers to a Court Martial for ignorance, or general want of zeal, for they are not sensible of either the one or the other; they laugh at what is called the old school, and fancy themselves quite fit to be Captains, when they are hardly fit for Mates.

The well-being of the Navy depends so much on the manner it is administered, that to be acquainted with the merits of the Board of Admiralty, we have only to observe the condition and discipline of our ships; if we see good ships built, and those ships in high order, well commanded, well officered, and well manned, the officers and men diligent, and doing their duty with zeal and alacrity, we may reasonably conclude that the Navy has been conducted by just and experienced men; but if, on the other hand, we see a general relaxation, no emulation, no zeal, and the generality of our ships in bad order, or in no order at all, we may pronounce without hesitation that the Navy has been ruled with injustice and partiality, and that the promotion has been sacrificed to political purposes, and consequently bestowed on men without either talent or experience, to the total exclusion of meritorious and old officers, who are left to pine in penury and neglect, or, if employed, are disgusted at seeing ignorant and foolish young men put over their heads, who are totally incapable of keeping their ships in the order that British men-of-war ought to be.

Perhaps there never was an instance of so complete a change in any profession, as that which the misrule of the late Board of Admiralty has, since the peace, produced in the Navy; a superficial observer might attribute this to the length of peace, and a supposed decrease of promotion; but I ascribe it to a very different cause.

When I look at the naval list, and observe that after a peace of twelve years it contains as many names as it did at the close of the war, while the number of officers employed has been but a very inconsiderable proportion to the war establishment; when I have seen the promotions bestowed almost entirely on young men of family and interest, the rapidity of whose rise has surpassed even what it was wont to do in war; when I have seen lieutenants made commanders who never kept an officer's watch in their lives, at the time lieutenants were serving of nearly twenty years' standing, and midshipmen who had passed their examination from ten to fourteen years—can I be surprised at the total want of zeal and energy that existed throughout the whole service at the conclusion of Lord Melville's administration, or could I have wondered at any misfortunes that might have befallen us in the event of a war with a well-disciplined enemy.

I have been thirty-two years in the service, and during that period, with the exception of commanders of sloops, first lieutenants, and senior midshipmen of line-of-battle ships and frigates, being promoted in consequence of the capture of an equal or superior force, I never observed anything like common justice in the distribution of promotion; a first lieutenant might be the best and most zealous officer in the Navy—that was no recommendation whatever for advancement. Captains who performed dashing enterprizes on the coast of an enemy, could sometimes get an officer promoted, but even then it depended more on the interest of the Captain than the nature of the service.

Under all these circumstances, if it be true, and admits not of a doubt, that good officers were rarely to be met with, can we be surprised at the Navy being now glutted with inexperienced officers.

We cannot be surprised when we learn that some of them have not been more than four years in a man-of-war, and perhaps not half that time at sea, while others have been brought up almost entirely in guard ships, and know more about driving a tandem

or hunting a fox, than taking in a top-sail or reefing a course in a gale of wind.

I look upon the Naval College as one of the greatest drawbacks in the service: boys go there at thirteen, and may obtain a good theoretical education; at fifteen they are sent on board a ship with two years' time, and at the end of a twelvemonth, should there be nothing particular against them, they are entitled to be rated midshipmen; the other youngsters who do not pass through the college, must wait for a midshipman's vacancy; this creates a spirit of emulation amongst them, particularly when it is known that it will be given to the most deserving candidate; these youngsters endeavour to gain the good opinion of their Captain, who may assist them in getting into another ship: the Collegians, on the other hand, get one from the Admiralty, and care very little about the good opinion of their Captains. At the end of six years the boy that came direct to sea, if he has been instructed by the Chaplain, which ought invariably to be the case, knows as much theoretically as the Collegian, has two years' more experience at sea, has more to stimulate him, and, supposing their abilities equal, must be greatly his superior.

I propose to substitute for the Naval College a small frigate, with a smart Captain and a choice crew of one hundred men; the guns should be taken off the main deck, which should be fitted for the young gentlemen; there they should mess and sleep; the ship's company should occupy the between decks, as they now do; the officers of the ship and the professors the gun room. They should be divided into three watches, and the topmen duty done entirely by them, with a certain number of seamen to assist and instruct them. This ship should not be kept in harbour, but she should be sent constantly to sea; the young gentlemen would then learn practical navigation and seamanship, and as they became qualified, should be discharged into men-of-war as midshipmen fully qualified to do their duty.

The Captain should make a quarterly return to the Admiralty, stating their qualifications, and whether they were attentive to their duty or not; and unless the reports were favourable, no interest whatever should induce the Admiralty to promote them.*

* In the latter part of the time I commanded the Channel Squadron, Lord Auckland, at my suggestion, would not promote a Midshipman unless recommended by his Captain.

It is probable such a professor as Dr. Inman would not be found; but there are abundance of young men who would be too happy to undertake their education. Such a system I have no doubt would not only improve the habits of the midshipmen, but would be the means of furnishing the Navy with good Lieutenants; and as the latter require just as much, if not more looking after than the boys, a quarterly return of their merits should also be made to the Admiralty, which would be the best check on all young gentlemen who now crowd the service, and fancy their interest quite sufficient to bring them forward without the necessity of exertion.

I shall enter little into the distribution of promotion, because I know full well that there are claims which the most independent First Lord of the Admiralty cannot help attending to; but if a fair mixture could be made, it is all that is desired.

As young men of family and interest will be promoted, I think it would be a very good regulation if they were obliged to purchase their commissions. If no Lieutenant could obtain a Commander's commission without purchase till he had served five years, or a Captain's till he had served four, you would get rid at once of all the young men of family and interest; they would not wait that time, and old Commanders and Captains would be too happy to sell. The death vacancies could then be given to old and meritorious officers, and in war officers performing dashing enterprises should be promoted without regard to the period of service.

Such an arrangement would cost nothing, would do away with the disgust that is now felt at seeing boys promoted so rapidly, would hold out encouragement to the old officers, which I can assure you is highly necessary, if you wish to preserve a conquering Navy, and at the same time ensure a certain number of experienced officers. We beat the French and Spaniards last war, not because we were in good discipline, but because they were in bad; and the moment we had to do with the Americans, we were disgraced.

Another advantage attending the sale of commissions would be quicker promotion from Captain to Admiral. At present all the old Captains are worn out; they are tired of the detail necessary to keep ships in order. What was a pleasure in their youth is a pain in more advanced life; and if the First Lieutenant is bad, the

ship goes to destruction. I was in a three-decked ship last, commanded by an old man. The lower-deck guns had not been run out for seven months; the men were so badly stationed that some guns had only two or three men, while others were full manned; and as for instructing them in gunnery or even exercing, I never saw it attempted. Had that ship been fallen in with at night by a small seventy-four she would have been taken, and I dare say Sir Thomas Hardy will tell you she was not the only one. Many of our frigates were also very bad; and the action of the Guerrière and Macedonia showed that they inflicted small injury on their opponents.

Rely upon it, Sir, that the generality of men sixty years of age are not fit for Captains; as Admirals there is greater scope for the mind, and the signal for exercise will show him what ships are in order and what are not. But most men of that age are too old for dash and enterprise. Lord Nelson fought the battle of the Nile at thirty-nine, Copenhagen at forty-two, and was killed at forty-seven. Had he been seventy, you would probably not have heard of either one or the other. When a man's body begins to shake, the mind follows; and he is always the last to find it out.

By Lord Collingwood's own account, he was beginning to fall off; and by every body else's account, he was done up long before he died.

I have heard Lord Exmouth say, and he is an extraordinary man, that a man at sixty was not fit for an Admiral, and there is not one on the Admirals' List at this moment of sixty-five that would have gone into Algiers: and few now are even Rear-Admirals at sixty.

The Captains' List, by a late order in council, is now divided into two classes—those who are entitled to their flags, and those who are not.

I should recommend the Flag List to be fixed at a stated number—say two hundred. The Retired List is thirty: the next promotion will bring it up to sixty.

When a vacancy took place on the Flag List, the senior eligible Captain should be promoted, and those who were not eligible should be removed to the Retired Captains' List, and there remain until a vacancy occurred on the Retired Admirals' List. All Captains in war time, who had served fifteen years, and were

of opinion that they had performed a series of services that entitled them to a flag, should demand it of the Admiral. He should be called before the Board, who should be sworn to do impartial justice: he should produce his testimonials, and bring forward good proof of the feats he had performed; and if, in their opinion, he had excelled all others, he should be made an Admiral by an order in council.

Any man, acquainted with human nature, will at once see the immense stimulus to exertion such a measure would create, and the advantage the country would reap from it. In former days flag promotions were not given by seniority. The same system has now become necessary, and the only difficulty is to guard it against undue influence.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

H. M. S. Galatea, May 17, 1831.

The following are letters I received from the Duke of Clarence when I had command of the Galatea. On the same occasion, when the Admiralty were informed of the Galatea being rigged so smartly, they replied, they were glad to hear it, as they supposed the ship would be ready before she was reported—a very cool commendation, certainly :—

To Captain Charles Napier.

DEAR SIR, In answer to yours of the 2nd instant, from Portsmouth, informing me of the Galatea being at 6 a. m. without the lower masts manned, that at 6 p. m. the *same* evening, she had her royal-yards across, and the ship completely rigged and rattled down, with *sixty men short of complement*, I can only observe, that *whether* in or *out of* office, *I must* be *equally* interested in the *welfare* of *the Navy*, and do compliment you from *the bottom* of *my heart* on this event.

I must now recommend the guns, for the *great object* of a *man of war* is *fighting*. I trust, and make no doubt, *the* officer *who*

can thus *rig* a ship, is equally able and willing to have his frigate *ready* to *cope* with an *enemy*.

I thank you again for your attention respecting a Midshipman, but at present have not any one to recommend.

I remain, my DEAR SIR,
Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM.

Bushy House, 5th March 1829.

To the same.

SIR, Your letter of the 16th instant, respecting the effect of the paddles on the Galatea, is perfectly satisfactory, and I shall of course be anxious to hear more as you improve in the exercise.

I remain, DEAR SIR,
Yours truly,
WILLIAM.

Bushy House, 20th May 1829.

To the Right Hon. Sir James Graham.

SIR, I have only now received your letter of the 28th of May, and I assure you, I feel highly flattered that you should have expressed yourself pleased with the suggestions I took the liberty of making. I knew full well, that in our service it is very difficult to introduce great changes, but it has just as much need of reform as the constitution; time, and the immense increase of the list, has made it absolutely necessary; and as you have done so much in a short time, I do not despair of your accomplishing all you wish: this cruize alone will be of incalculable benefit to the Navy; and I can assure you that it was much wanted. It is almost incredible, that during a peace of sixteen years, we have only had one squadron before this at sea, and if the unsettled state of Europe had not obliged us to keep up a force in the Mediterranean, the service would have been worse than it now is; and I trust some of the naval men now in Parliament will be able

to cast off the lashings of their tongues, and mention in the House the good that will arise by keeping the ships ready for service, instead of allowing them to degenerate into guard ships, where officers and men acquire habits that never can be eradicated.

We have had a good many evolutions, and latterly very well. Ships are not quite so smart as they used to be, but that will come round. The Barham does well, and the Tweed is a fine corvette out of a bad frigate. The Galatea has been tried once with her paddles. A signal was made to take the Caledonia in tow, and we paddled up from our station to the admiration of the whole squadron, took hold of her, and lugged her along at the rate of a knot and a quarter, and under very unfavourable circumstances, all which will be stated by Sir Edward Codrington*. For three years I have been trying to get a fair trial; but it has always been put off for one reason or another, till too late in the season, and I verily believe on purpose. I was promised by Lord Melville to be allowed to fit them in a three-decker, when satisfied with their utility, but they never wished to be satisfied.

I proposed to the late Admiralty to pay the expences if the Galatea did not go three knots with her paddles. I made the same offer to move a three-decker at the same rate; and really at the time that steam is getting to such a pitch, a fleet ought not to be exposed to lay in a calm like logs, when they possess the means within themselves of moving.

In war it will be impossible to have steam off every enemy's port, and if we do not do something we shall be more exposed than we were to gun boats. I remember, and I dare say so does Admiral Dundas, when we were obliged to watch for weeks to reconnoitre Naples Bay, and then it was done with dread of the gun boats. At present in the Galatea, I would not care for a fleet of them.

I have the honour to be, SIR,
Your obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

September, 1831.

* See Sir Edward Codrington's Report.

To Sir J. Pechell.

SIR, I address this letter to you on the Naval Administration of Great Britain, because you are a senator, an officer of experience, and sufficiently rich to be independent. You are, moreover, a well-wisher to the service of which you are so distinguished a member, and enjoy to a considerable extent the good opinion of your Sovereign, whose devoted attachment to the Navy is well known; and who, from the high office he recently held, cannot be ignorant of the defective state of its administration. Called, as he has been, to the throne of his ancestors, he can no longer be expected to devote his whole attention to any particular branch; and may even be unwilling to force his ministers to break up establishments, sanctioned by time, and which would be supported by those interested in their continuance, with the same pertinacity that old and bad establishments have been from time immemorial. Were, however, the badness of the system, and the evils of which it is productive, publicly exposed in the House of Commons, by a well-informed Naval officer, supported as he would be by the other Naval members of that House, most of whom must be thoroughly acquainted with the defects of the administration, ministers would be obliged to give way, and to remodel it on a more efficient system. Than by thus fearlessly devoting himself to remedy the evils that press so hard on the Naval service of this country, I know of no greater honour an officer could possibly obtain.

I am aware that I shall be met with the hackneyed phrase, that the "Navy have beaten their opponents wherever they have found them; therefore, why make alterations?" It is admitted, that we have hitherto been the victors; yet let it be remembered, that although our enemies were better found in every respect than us, they were worse officered, worse manned, worse disciplined, and less experienced. But we have had a peace of sixteen years; and other nations have been advancing in about the same proportion we have been retrograding. I very much doubt, therefore, whether the rising generation of Naval officers now employed are one bit more experienced than our neighbours on the other side of the water; and, indeed, I am persuaded, that, in real practical know-

ledge, they are inferior to the Americans. The latter, I fear, may read us a worse lesson than they did last war; and should we be once cowed by a few unsuccessful actions, the Lord have mercy on the vanquished and the ministers who rule them; for nothing will repress the angry feelings of the British nation at seeing disasters befal the Navy of their country.

But having offered these observations with respect to the Navy in general, it will be necessary, in order to substantiate their validity, to analyze its present administration, and show that it is bad; and in so doing, I will endeavour to expose the system, and, as much as the nature of the case will permit, to spare individuals. All Naval officers must be aware, though many civilians may not, that the Navy is administered by four Boards, namely, the Admiralty, the Navy, the Ordnance, and the Victualling.

The Board of Admiralty is composed of a First Lord (generally a peer of the realm, a civilian, and always a cabinet minister), two Flag officers, and two civilians. The principal duties of the First Lord are politics and patronage, the latter of which is so engrossed by the cabinet ministers and their friends, that little or nothing is left to the service. When in town he holds a levee once a week. The same officer, however, can seldom see him more than once a year; and then the interview is of such a nature, and there is such a manifest impatience to put an end to it, that all that passes is forgotten before the officer is well out of the door.

The duties of the first Sea Lord are many and various; he is the adviser on naval matters to the First Lord; has the stationing of the ships and the general affairs of the Navy to attend to; in short, he is the working man; three times a week he is visible to all officers. He is the person before whom they lay their claims and their grievances, which he submits or not, as he pleases, to the First Lord; a friend or elector of his own will naturally be supported; a stranger, unless his case is a very good one, which I am willing to believe would lead to an attentive hearing, will probably be referred to the First Lord. In general, the interviews are of short duration, and succeed each other so rapidly, that it is quite impossible for a man, who has many other things to engage his attention, to recollect one half that is said, or to read one half that is written.

The second Sea Lord nominally appoints to ships all officers

below the rank of Commander, and is as much pressed upon by the other Lords as the First Lord is by the ministers.

The cleverer of the civilians defends the measures of the Admiralty (of which he cannot be a judge) in the House of Commons; he is supposed to be a financier, and endeavours to instruct the other civilian in his duties. The British Navy is consequently ruled by two seamen who know their duty, and crippled by the interference of two landsmen, who cannot be supposed to know anything about it*.

Under a Board so constructed, it is only to be wondered at that the Navy has not been worse conducted. In the Army, there is a head to inquire into the state of the regiments, but with us there is no one to examine into the discipline of our ships. It is true they are inspected previous to being paid off by the Port Admiral, but that is insufficient; they always brush up for his visit, and the examination is never gone through with that minute attention that is necessary; there is no real loading and firing, no practising at a mark, no exercising sails, no shifting masts and yards, no weighing, no anchoring, &c. all of which should be gone through before any report is made to the Admiralty.

When His Present Majesty was Lord High Admiral, nobody knew when he was coming; we were always on the look out; and I venture to say that during the short time he was at the head of the Navy, officers exerted themselves more than ever they did before or have done since, to get their ships in order. Lieutenants expected to be made commanders, commanders to be promoted to Captains, and Captains, should their ships excel others, to receive praise; and indeed there was a stimulus given to all classes of officers.

At present there is no encouragement whatever for zeal and energy; on the contrary, it is discouraged. The First Lord never inspects the ships; and if he did, he cannot be supposed to know anything about them. The Sea Lords, in their individual capacity, cannot perform this duty, and the Board is too unwieldy to attempt it. But on the supposition that they were to visit our vessels of war, and found any particular ship in high order, they have not the power to reward by promotion. The First Lord keeps that to himself and his friends, and nothing interferes more with his

* The present Junior Lords are all Naval men.

arrangements than having officers of zeal and energy forced into his notice. This accounts for their clapping an extinguisher on all sorts of claims; and this will also account for the Navy failing, in the event of being again placed in the many perilous and difficult situations that they were last war, when nothing but zeal, energy, discipline, and practical seamanship could have led to the performance of the feats they did.

In the event of returning hostilities, should success attend the first onset, that energy may all again come back, but there is a young nation on the other side the Atlantic, making rapid strides in naval tactics, and where merit has a greater chance of being brought forward than in this country. The Americans have a boisterous coast to bring up hardy seamen; they have constructors capable of building, and who do build the finest ships in the world; and they are unincumbered by worn out and inefficient Boards.

With respect to the promotion of the Navy, were you to place the most conscientious man in the three kingdoms at its head, I defy him, in its limited state, to carry it on otherwise. Whether he wishes or not, he must attend to interest; and in consequence, he must ultimately ruin the service. That ruin, should the plan of promoting only one in three vacancies be adhered to, may come upon us before we are aware; for it will now be impossible, occasionally to shove in an old officer or two to save appearances, and to stop the mouth of Mr. Joseph Hume when he attacks them on the subject of promotion.

An officer who has not served since the peace, and rejoins the service in the present day, will see few traces of the war system left. The Navy now is like a painting that has been copied, and re-copied, and has lost all appearance of the original. Since the peace, interest has taken the lead in the employment of officers to the almost entire exclusion of merit. Young men take ships solely for their promotion and amusement, and bring up a set of youngsters (who consider all duty a bore) with the same ideas. Soon the latter are promoted, and become worse than their predecessors. They in their turn bring up a fresh set worse than themselves; and the only check given to this retrograde movement is the occasional employment of an old and good officer, who for a time goes against the stream, but cannot stop it.

It is very easy to point out the cause of the decay of the Naval service, but very difficult to propose a complete remedy. The

great difference of the nature of the service in peace and war, is no doubt the principal cause of the change; the Admiralty had it not in their power to correct that evil, but they might have so regulated the service as to have prevented some part of the mischief that has been done. In time of peace, when it is impossible for Midshipmen to acquire the same experience as in war, they ought to have turned their attention to the Naval College, and as it rarely turned out good Lieutenants in war, it was very evident they must be worse in peace; it is true, the time they could acquire at the College was reduced to two years instead of three, but that was a very feeble improvement. Young gentlemen join that establishment at thirteen; they receive a very good education, as far as navigation goes; and they come on board a ship with a certain quantity of sea-time, without having the most distant idea of naval affairs; with the exception of rowing and sailing in boats for their amusement, there is no attention whatever paid to seamanship; they may go to the rigging loft if they please, but that forms no part of their college education. They are appointed to ships by the Admiralty, with their heads full of theory, fancying themselves the cleverest fellows in the world, and quite above the youngsters the Captains were formerly permitted to bring to sea. The Admiralty have lately, by way of putting a finishing stroke to the chance of having good Midshipmen, taken the appointment of the youngsters into their own hands, which will ultimately lead to the exclusion from the service of all the young men who are not sons of Peers and men of interest*. Before this arrangement, the College Midshipmen in most ships were taken under the care of the Captains, equally with his own youngsters, and had the same chance of learning their profession, with this difference, that being older, they felt much stronger the annoyances inseparable from a Midshipman's life; and at the end of four years, always inferior in practical seamanship, and very often in zeal for the service, to the youngsters who came to sea earlier, and without passing through the Naval College: about this time they pass their examination for seamanship, which is much too lenient; those who have interest, are made Lieutenants, and have charge of a watch, when they are hardly fit to be Mate of it.

* This is now altered; the nomination to the situations of First-class Volunteers, Midshipmen, and Mates, is again restored to the Captains.

Of seamanship they know little or nothing, have no idea of carrying on duty in the smart way it ought to be done in a man-of-war, and, as Lieutenants, quite above learning; all they think of, is dancing about on shore, as may be naturally expected, and passing their two years as agreeably as possible, when they are most probably made Commanders.

It is very evident, with two or three of those young gentlemen in a frigate, there is little chance of her being a smart man-of-war; the Captain may be as rigid as he pleases, but he cannot be on deck at all times, nor can the First Lieutenant, and it is difficult to instruct young men, who fancy they know quite enough: at night he must have the nerves of the devil to get any rest at all, or he must give up all idea of carrying sail, for one-half of them neither know when or how to take it in. Another bad effect on the service is, the almost certainty of the Collegians being rated Midshipmen after a year's service at sea, while the others must wait for vacancies. I will suppose, on a ship being first commissioned, four youngsters formerly of the Captain's choice (but now chosen by the Admiralty)*, and four sent by the College, at the end of the year are equally meritorious; the Captain must either disgust the Admiralty youngsters, whom he cannot rate till vacancies occur, or he must keep back the Collegians, who have a right to be rated; should the latter be less deserving than the others, which more than probably will be the case, as they are† sure of ships, and have less to stimulate them, the disgust of the other youngsters must be still greater. The Admiralty having now entirely taken the appointment of youngsters into their own hands, they will become, in a certain degree, independent of the Captains; he will have little or no interest in their welfare, cannot be expected to take charge of their money affairs, education, or any thing else, they will go on pretty nearly as they please, and one-half of them will probably turn out scamps. To remedy part of those evils, I would transfer all the young gentlemen at the Naval College on board a 28-gun frigate, commanded by a smart and strict Captain, with a chosen set of officers, and a crew of 100 picked men. The ship's company should occupy the lower deck, as they now do; the officers of the

* They are not now the nominees of the Admiralty.

† This is to be altered; a College Midshipman will ensure his second ship, *only* by his good conduct in the first he is appointed to.

ship and the Professor the gun-room; the main deck (on which there should be no guns), with the exception of the Captain's cabin, should be fitted for the young gentlemen; there they should sleep, mess, and receive their tuition; they should be divided into three watches, and the topmen's duty should be done by them night and day, with a certain number of seamen to assist and instruct them; the watch below should go on with their studies from breakfast to dinner-time, and after dinner till five in the afternoon. This ship should not be kept laying in harbour, but should be sent to all countries and climates; then the young gentlemen would learn practical navigation and seamanship; and when qualified, they should be discharged into the different men-of-war, as Midshipmen knowing their duty, and fit to do it, instead of coming on board as youngsters, where they are placed to command before they know how to obey.

I shall be told that good professors will not embark (probably such men as Doctor Inman will not be found), but there are plenty of young men fully capable of giving them all the instruction they require, to make them navigators and seamen. The *mammas* in all probability would also make objections; those that did, might keep their boys at home, which would be the greatest favour they could confer on the British Navy.

Another class of officers, about the most useful in the Navy, the Admiralty have taken much pains to render inefficient—I mean the masters; formerly, they received their education in the Merchant Service, where they became good pilots, and found their way into the Navy in various modes: the few ships that were lost during the war, and the respectability of the generality of that class of officers, was a very good proof that the nursery they were brought up in was good. Ships are now supplied with volunteers of the Second Class and Masters' Assistants; from thence they are advanced to Second Masters, and finally, Masters*; it is easy to see, from the little experience they can have in a man-of-war of coasts and harbours, that they never can become good pilots, which is the most necessary part of a Master's duty. To learn to be a pilot, lads must be brought up in small vessels, where they are constantly poking about every creek and corner of the coast; there they acquire the habit of closing with the land, which is a

* Masters' Assistants are now done away with.

very necessary qualification for a good master. I would abolish the whole system, and hold out more encouragement to the Masters; they should be styled sailing Lieutenants, and the road of promotion should be as open to them as to any officer in the ship. All Lieutenants should be eligible for that appointment after going through a very strict examination at the Trinity House: they should take rank agreeable to their seniority, be better paid than the other Lieutenants, should always be inferior to the first Lieutenant, though senior to him in rank, and they should just be as eligible for promotion as any other Lieutenant in the ship.

It has often been proposed to allow the sale of commissions, and as his Majesty seems determined to put the Navy on as liberal a footing as the Army, I have no doubt, that ere long, it will be permitted, and if wisely arranged, I believe it would tend more than any other measure I am aware of, to prevent the Navy falling into decay.

I have already observed, that almost all the promotion is bestowed on young men of interest; a Lieutenant, after serving two years afloat, is eligible to be made a Commander, and a Commander, after a year's service, can be made a Captain. I should propose, that, after serving the above time, they should only be eligible to purchase their commissions, and no Lieutenant who had not served five years afloat, and no Commander who had not served four years, should be promoted without purchase, except in cases of brilliant services against the enemy. Young men of family and fortune would not wait that time, and the First Lord would get them entirely off his hands, and be able to bring forward in the other vacancies that occurred, a considerable number of old and experienced officers; but if some such arrangement does not take place, those who possess the greatest interest will be promoted without purchase, the next interest will purchase, and the old officer, without money or interest, will remain where he is.

The Navy Board has been lately reformed, or rather remodelled, for the firm is the same; it is now composed of a Comptroller (who of late years has been an Admiral); Deputy Comptroller (formerly a Naval officer, and now filled by a civilian, because, I suppose, he understands more of naval affairs and rigging warrants than a naval officer, and is more competent to manage the affairs of the Navy in the absence of the Comptroller); Storekeeper-general (a naval officer, but who ought to be a civilian); Superin-

tendent of Transports (a naval officer); Accomptant General (a civilian); and two Surveyors.

Its duties are immense, and of the utmost importance to the country; under them are the dock-yards, ships in ordinary, repairing and building of ships, plans of those built, improvement of the masting, stowing and sailing of ships, storing of the fleet, making contracts, full-pay and half-pay of the Navy, and, indeed, the expenditure of upwards of five millions annually; they ought to be men of great talent and experience, particularly as it is a fundamental rule at Somerset House to reject every plan for the improvement of the Navy, be it good or bad, or coming from a man of talent or a blockhead, considering themselves the *ne plus ultra* of perfection, and believing that the whole naval talent of the country is centred in their own body. Sometimes, indeed it happens, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, plans proposed by others are brought forward as their own; and should anything be so strikingly good that they are afraid not to adopt it, you are informed that your ideas have been anticipated! Lately, a committee of naval officers have been forced down their throats, to review the rigging warrant, which they might have done themselves had they attended to the various representations that were made to them; but their bigotry and obstinacy would not allow them to listen to any proposal tending to change an establishment that had subsisted for a century, or more, for ought I know.

It is only necessary to show how the Navy Board is composed, to prove that it is morally impossible they should be possessed of the shining qualifications so necessary to the well-being of the naval service.

Hitherto, for a naval officer to obtain a seat there, it was necessary he should have sufficient interest to be appointed to a foreign dock-yard (for the appointment of Sir Michael Seymour to Portsmouth was a deviation from the general rule); and after moving from one to another, for a considerable number of years, he succeeded to the first vacant seat at Somerset House, provided none of the Commissioners of the home dock-yards preferred moving, well versed no doubt in the business of a yard, and if not too old and too long out of active service, probably acquainted with the wants of the Navy. On taking his seat he finds himself placed amongst a set of old gentlemen, (and perhaps a young statesman or two) who have been out of the sphere of naval

improvements for the last twenty years, and who oppose, as innovations, any ameliorations he may wish to introduce; and he is at last obliged to give up the point, and gradually adopt all the ideas of Navy Board supremacy.

The office of Comptroller is, I believe, generally bestowed on some man of interest, who, perhaps, may be a man of talent; but I do not believe the latter qualification is considered at all necessary to obtain the office, if he has no other recommendations; that of Deputy Comptroller is now sunk, like the Chairman of the Victualling Board, into a regular ministerial job.

The surveyors, on whom chiefly depend the goodness or badness of our ships, either are, or ought to be chosen for their talents; but if I am to judge from what they have produced, such as the fir thirty-two's and twenty-two-gun corvettes, neither of which could stand up under canvass or sail—the twenty-eight gun frigates, which can neither fight nor run away—the Forty Thieves—together with the bad sailing of the Navy in general, I should be inclined to estimate their abilities for sailing qualities very low. At the same time, I am ready to admit there has been great improvement in the manner of strengthening ships in their construction, as well as in their general fitting.

The fault of building the classes I have mentioned lies with the Board of Admiralty, but their models with the Navy Board; and if they could not hit upon plans of their own that would sail well, they ought to have been less bigoted, and copied from their neighbours; but, somehow or other, whenever they got hold of an enemy's fast-sailing ship, she was sure to be got rid of under some pretext or other, and if ordered to build after her, they made some change, by way of improvement, and spoilt her.

All those gentlemen remain in their situations for life, or until they find themselves useless, which is never till many years after they are judged so by the rest of the world.

Commissioners of dockyards are really so very comfortable, that no one in his senses will retire as long as he can hold together; and I believe they are not removeable, except for some glaring misconduct.

I confess I have no faith in any department being well conducted or greatly improved, when the mainspring is allowed to rust; it loses its elasticity in time, and becomes unfit to perform its functions.

I am inclined to think the Admiralty have of late years interfered more with the classing our ships than formerly: they are now doing what every officer of experience in the service knew, twenty years ago, was absolutely necessary to be done; they have discontinued building small three-deckers, and made good eighty-gun ships of those they had; they have tried the experiment of adding to the beam of some of our three-deckers, and I hope they will succed; it was, however, a great risk to touch so fine a ship as the Caledonia, and if she is spoilt the adviser of that measure deserves the greatest censure*. They have also discontinued forty-four's and fifties on two-decks, sixty-four's and small seventy-four's, and have cut down a dozen of the Forty Thieves to frigates, carrying fifty long 32-pounders, and I understand, with the exception of stowage, they answer admirably; they have also constructed a number of large frigates mounting fifty-two 24-pounders, and 42-pound carronades; so far we are on a footing with other nations: but it is to be regretted we have built so many new forty-six's†.

The class of forty-two's ought not to be discontinued, as they are very handy ships, and might be useful on many occasions where the others are too large: they ought to mount forty guns only, and have their masts and yards considerably reduced, for though they are nearly a hundred tons less than the forty-six's, the difference in the masting is trifling, and indeed, some are as heavy-masted.

The Euryalus, the parent of the forty-two's, was a sweet and beautiful ship, far superior in qualities and appearance to the others, and as she was *not* built in a king's yard, was put out of sight in the character of a convict ship. This class is crank, because over-masted, which would be a sufficient reason with any sensible body to reduce them; but the Navy Board, in their wisdom, keep up their present establishment, though it must be very evident, either they are over-masted, or the forty-six's are under-masted.

The Admiralty have also discontinued the construction of all small frigates, with the exception of the twenty-eight's, and

* The Caledonia does not sail so well as before she was altered, and carries her guns lower.

† They have almost all disappeared, and chiefly without being at sea.

although they have given a philippic to the Navy Board, in allowing persons unconnected with them to build several after their own plan, and have, in consequence, improved their sailing qualities, yet I am at a loss to guess for what purpose they are built. All those constructed by the Navy Board sail badly, and are just as much undermasted as the forty-two's are overmasted, and have about the same chance of being improved as the others. They are quite unfit to cope with the corvettes of other nations mounting long 18-pounders or short twenty-fours, and sail too ill to run away from them.

The corvette, equal to the twenty-eight at close quarters, may, if he pleases, choose his distance, and, making sure work of it, unrig him at long balls with impunity, and finally capture him: the world will then believe a British frigate has been taken by a corvette, and the relative force of both will be little thought of. In addition to this, many sail so ill that a schooner with a long 18-pounder on a sweep, in light winds, would first unrig them, and then take them, to the total ruin of character of the unfortunate Captain, officers, and crew.

In the event of hostilities, several will probably be taken in the way I have described, and we shall be obliged to send frigates to cruise after them, until we have built corvettes, or cut down frigates, in the same way that we were hastily obliged to cut down line-of-battle ships to cope with the American frigates last war.

Another great error we have committed is, spoiling the eighteen-gun brigs—the finest class of vessels we ever built. Thirty years ago two of them were tried as ships, and failed; and still with that example before our eyes, we have, at an expence of nearly £900 each, turned them all into paltry ships, and have built several other corvettes, a little larger, but totally unfit to cope with those of other nations.

It cannot be for a moment doubted, that a ship is a better man-of-war than a brig, if sailing equally well, which would be a good reason to construct no more brigs, but a bad one for putting a third mast into a vessel built and formed only for two: we might just as well turn cutters into brigs and schooners, because two masts are better than one

In the great question of classing the ships, the Admiralty and Navy Board, I presume, act together, at least, as much as two Boards "jealous of each other" can do; but in the other details

of the Navy it is hard to say who deserves praise or censure. I have heard the spoiling of the eighteen-gun brigs saddled on the Admiralty: whether justly or unjustly I know not. It is very well known that they in general refer all plans to the Navy Board, not liking the trouble, or choosing to take the responsibility on themselves. If they are particularly anxious about carrying any thing into effect, the Navy Board are directed to do it; and, except in such cases, matters are cut very short by their rejecting every thing that is proposed to them; and that feeling pervades every department under their direction.

I have no doubt, but it has been often reported, that the forty-two-gun frigates are overmasted, and as often that the twenty-eight's are undermasted without effect. It has often been represented, that a ship taking fire, though surrounded by water, stands a chance of being burnt, for want of adequate means to put it out: you are supplied with an engine, and abundance of buckets, it is true; but when fire once gets a-head, it is impossible to approach it with buckets for smoke, and the only means left is your engines. The pumps are now about to be fitted to act as engines, after about a quarter of a century's deliberation.

The round stern, as proposed by Roberts, Lang, and Blake, (for they all claim it)*, still rests in *statu quo*, though adopted by all other nations but ourselves; with that stern, the rudder is covered, the ship preserves her counter and her beauty, the guns are run close out, and the ship as strong and compact as is necessary; but still that abominable stern of the Navy Board is persisted in, where the rudder is exposed, the ship deprived of her counter, which was always considered not only useful, but absolutely necessary, to throw the sea off from the cabin windows, and a parcel of scaffolding stuck on outside, all of which, if not taken down, is blown away when the stern-guns are fired, and which entirely destroys the appearance of a man-of-war. The President and Dublin have beautiful and useful sterns, and if the Vindictive was left to the dock yard, she also would have a fine stern; but there is a patched-up thing come down from the Navy Board, a bad copy of the other stern, and which is the *ne plus ultra* of ugliness. I by no means blame the Navy Board for exercising its ingenuity in improving the stern frames of

* That stern is now in use.

our ships, which was certainly their weakest part, though, notwithstanding the long list of defective-sterned ships published, I never heard many complaints against them; and I am old enough to recollect, it was always a quiz against the Duke of Bolton, who, wishing to get into port, made an excuse that his stern-frame was loose, when, in all probability, he only wanted to set up his bob-stays.

The Dutch shipbuilders appear to have been wiser than us, for in all their vessels with round sterns, they made allowance for the want of counter, and raised their sterns, and consequently their cabin windows, considerably higher than vessels built in the usual way; and as this could not have been done in men-of-war, without making the after-guns useless, their plan ought not to have been recommended (for their plan it most certainly is); nor ought the Admiralty to have adopted it; but I believe the truth is, the inconvenience was never thought of, until half the Navy was cut and carved into round sterns, and to make up for the want of counters, a false one was clapt on, as a plea to make the ships look better, and the Captains more comfortable, but in reality, as a substitute for the old counter. It is, however, not at all clear that the want of counter is sufficiently remedied, and I fear, when our ships are constantly at sea in all weathers, the defect will be found out, when too late to remedy it.

The impolicy of teaching the enemy how to arm their sterns, which was generally the first part presented to our view, rests with the Admiralty; we have always been the attacking party (and God help the country when we cease to be so); and our attention ought to have been turned to the bow instead of the stern, and thanks to Mr. Blake, of Portsmouth Yard, and thanks to the Navy Board for once, for permitting it, he has brought nearly as many guns right a-head as they brought astern, which is the true English way of making improvements.

Another great cause of complaint against the Navy Board at present is, their neglect of steam, or rather their ignorance of it, and the sort of underhand way they go to work to get information, instead of manfully encouraging those who have made it their study to assist them.

Several steamboats were built for the use of the dockyards, the greater part of which are now put into commission; and they, with their usual wisdom, lengthened three ten-gun brigs fifteen feet, into which vessels were put two fifty-horse engines, weighing pretty

nearly 100 tons, and when their coals were in, without guns, stores, or anything else but what was necessary for a few men, they were loaded nearly up to the main shaft. Had they consulted any person acquainted with steamboats, that error would have been prevented, and much money saved to the public. Although those vessels are of the utmost use to assist ships ashore, and if fitted with capstans, worked by the engines, they would heave any ship off the ground, or tear her to pieces, not one of them have any apparatus of this nature, though I happen to know it has been more than once pointed out.

The Dee steam frigate, building at Woolwich, I know was nearly a copy of the Queen of Scotland, a vessel intended for passengers only, and if they had gone on with her as originally intended, she would have only carried ten days fuel, and been useless; whether they have reconsidered their plan or not, God knows; but time will shew.

Several years ago, a very good plan was adopted of carrying out a heavy anchor, suspended to the midship part of the boat, instead of over the stern, which was built very clumsy and heavy for that purpose, and of course impeded her progress; but it was only the other day that an order was given to discontinue the clumsy stern.

The bad formation of the top-gallant-masts, by tapering away too much at the head, and being too slight, is an old story; the dock-yard dares not change their form, and the only chance of having a good top-gallant-mast is, by getting a rough spar, and making it yourself.

It would be endless to point out all the faults and follies of the Navy Board; but there is one which came under my knowledge at Portsmouth, too good to pass over: the Victory was so light, that when she heeled, the wash-deck pump became useless for raising water: application was made for a pump to be fitted in the head for that purpose, which was of course refused; one of the ordinary pumps was placed over the bows, which was soon carried away, as might have been expected, by boats and vessels getting athwart hawse; another application was made with the same success; and during the time she bore the flag at Portsmouth, she lost more pumps than would have paid over and over again for what was asked for.

The Ordnance is a branch of the service that has engrossed much of your attention, and I have no hesitation in saying, that by your

exertions you have excited the attention of most naval officers to gunnery, and have been the means of greatly improving its practice; and you are well aware how very inefficient this branch of our service is. The Ordnance department is composed of a Master-General, Lieutenant-General*, Surveyor-General, Clerk of the Ordnance, and Storekeeper; the officers form a Board, but their decisions are subject to the approval of the Master-General, who has the chief responsibility, but the officers composing the Board have also their individual share. They are almost all military men, and consider themselves a military body—the Navy is only a secondary consideration; there never has been more than one naval officer at the Board, and at present there is none†; and even with one naval officer there, it is easy to be convinced he only plays a second or third fiddle. I know nothing of their efficiency with regard to the Army, but as far as the Navy is concerned, they are even worse, and more obstinate than the Navy Board. By what strange perversion of common sense and reason so material a branch of naval equipment should have fallen under a Board of military men, who, from their habits and education, must be entirely ignorant of anything connected with a ship, is not easy to define. It was owing to their parsimony in the allowance of powder and shot for exercise, that the Navy found themselves so inefficient when brought into play with the Americans, who had made the gun exercise their chief study. I do not pretend that our frigates should have taken the Americans as a thing of course, but they ought to have at least left their mark, which they positively did not do; the value of a frigate would have supplied the Navy with a proper allowance of powder and shot for exercise one half the war—the quantity allowed was indeed so trifling, that it was hardly thought worth using, and no conscientious man could have got his ship in good fighting order; fortunately we had some who had little or no conscience, and expended the powder and shot that they used for exercise in various ways, for which they were liable, if found out, to pay for it, or even to be tried by a Court Martial, if the Admiralty thought fit. At present the allowance is not enough to get the ship in proper fighting order, under two or three years, whereas, enough ought to

* This office is now abolished.

† The Hon. Captain Duncan, R. N., is now Surveyor-General of this Department.

be allowed to accomplish that material part of duty in a week. All dumb exercise is a humbug; I have seen men who went through it to admiration, and when they came to real firing, there was nothing but noise and confusion; some loaded without shot, others forgot the cartridge, others again to stop the vent, and as for hitting the object, that was never thought of.

The arms that are supplied are of the worst kind, many of the muskets go off at half-cock, many won't go off at all, and all are of so bad a form, that after firing a dozen rounds, the men's shoulders are black and blue; in short, the phrase of being "as bad as a ship's musket" is quite proverbial*. The cartouch boxes are so ill fitted, that they are always upsetting, and the cartridges tumbling about; they ought to be quite flat, and strapped round the waist like the Spanish guerilla†. The tin-tube boxes are also unsafe, too slight, and always out of repair; they are always upsetting, and so difficult to shut, that a spark is very liable to blow the wearer up; in most ships they are discontinued altogether, and proper boxes fitted on board. The gun carriages, in many ships, are so ill fitted, and depress so little, that if passing to leeward of an enemy's ship, under a heavy press of sail, or if your ship is crank, you cannot depress the guns sufficiently to hit much lower than the mast-head, when at the same time she will hull you with every shot. The beds and quoins are so ill fitted, that between the end of the quoin and the bed there is a difference of several degrees, and if you wish to elevate still more, it requires the greatest ingenuity with the bed and quoin to come to any result at all‡; a few guns have been lately fitted with screws, which answer very well, and which even the Spaniards have adopted; but the Ordnance department are so afraid that we should become too expert, or that fighting should become a plaything, that we are just allowed enough to tantalize us; if they are found too expensive, I recommend a bed and quoin, invented by the carpenter of the Hussar, which is very perfect. The great unwieldy aprons are so heavy, that they are taken off and laid on one side altogether, and as an expert Captain will always prime his guns in running out, there is constant danger of their going off by sparks

* The muskets and pistols have been much improved.

† They are also improved.

‡ This is now remedied.

from its neighbour. There are many other things just as bad, and which, as long as the present system stands, will never be corrected. We are not represented there, and every thing stands still.

The Victualling Board is composed of a General, a Captain, two Doctors, and two Pursers; what a soldier has to do with the Victualling of the Navy, the Board of Admiralty, who turned out that good and honest man, Commissioner Serle, to make way for a soldier and relation of the late Lord Castlereagh, can best judge; he put the Victualling on an excellent system, and got through many years of arrears of accounts. The naval slop clothing has been lately turned over to this Board, and though it is much improved, is still bad and very dear; and nothing will do away with the appearance of a Purser's jacket*. The whole system should be abolished, and the clothing left entirely to the Captain and signing officers of the ship.

When a ship is first put into commission, the Captain, First Lieutenant, and Master, should be allowed to contract for the clothing of the ship's company, which could be done much better and cheaper than it now is; the men would be regularly measured for their clothes, and the officers would have it in their power to reject what was bad; men would then be well dressed from their first starting, instead of being rigged in pursers' slops for the first twelve months, ill made, ill fitted, and very dear. After pointing out the defects and imperfections of the present system, and the experience of so many years to prove that it is not likely to mend, it will be expected I should be prepared to propose a remedy; and though it must be extremely difficult for an individual who has not the means of acquainting himself with all the ramifications of office, still he may suggest improvements that may be brought into play by influential men, of which number I conceive you are one; and though it is an Herculean labour to change old establishments, still it is to be done by perseverance: the Slave and Catholic Bills were both carried by the same means.

As it is generally supposed the office of Lord High Admiral is too high a situation for an individual, recourse must be had to a Board, which, though an irresponsible body, may be constituted much better than it now is. If a civilian must sit at its head, he

* The clothing is very much improved

should be First Lord; if an Admiral, Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet; he should be assisted by the Vice and Rear-Admirals of Great Britain, which situations should be abolished as sinecures, and conferred on the two senior Naval Lords, *thereby causing a saving of £900 a year;* their duties should be the same as they now are; an Admiral as Superintendent of the Dock Yards; another Admiral to superintend the Victualling and Medical Departments; a Captain of the Fleet to assist the First Lord of the Admiralty in his inspections, and be the man to whom officers should address themselves, instead of to his private Secretary, and he should be accessible at all times. *The Treasurer of the Navy,* who should be a good financier and speaker, and who should bring the Estimates before the House. *The two Lay Lords should be abolished; and if they really have any duty to perform, let our Naval officers do it.* Attached to this Board (besides what there now is) should be a Surveyor of the Navy, Storekeeper-General, Accomptant-General, *Superintendent of Transports,* Physician of the Fleet, Purser of the Fleet, and Adjutant-General of Marines.

General Stapleton, one Surveyor, one Physician, and one Purser, should accept the Chiltern Hundreds, and the number of Clerks necessary should be attached to each branch. All correspondence should be carried on with the member of the board charged with the department you had business with, and if dissatisfied with his decision, a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Admiralty should be submitted to them on board days, and each individual member would also bring forward such subjects that he did not think himself competent to decide on.

When the First Lord of the Admiralty had not time or inclination to make his inspections at the different naval stations, the Vice or Rear-Admirals should be dispatched; they should hoist their flags, and for the time being, be superior to all admirals; the chiefs of the other departments in like manner, should be paramount in the dockyards, victualling departments, and hospitals, but should have nothing to do with the fleet.

The First Lord, accompanied by the Captain of the fleet to instruct him in the particular parts which he did not understand, should be Commander-in-Chief in all the departments.

I have made no attempt to separate the Naval part of the Ordnance from the Army, and put it entirely under the Admiralty,

because I do not see my way clear; but if it is possible, without putting the country to a great expense, it would be advisable to put the gun wharfs at the various ports under a naval officer, they might still draw their stores from Woolwich; and an Admiral to superintend that important branch should be added to the Admiralty, it being understood, that the Arsenal at Woolwich should comply with all the requisitions of the Admiralty, relative to the naval ordnance stores, and officers should have no correspondence with the Ordnance whatever.

As the offices at the Admiralty would not be sufficient for this establishment, the whole should be transferred to Somerset House, which should be given entirely up to the Navy; and as things are now constituted, it would only be necessary for the Surveyor, Accomptant-General, Storekeeper-General, and Superintendent of Transports to retire to their private rooms, leaving Sir Byam Martin to receive Lord Melville, Sir George Cockburn, Sir Henry Hotham, Commissioner Woolly, the Captain of the Fleet, Treasurer of the Navy, and, if necessary, another naval lord or two, in lieu of the two civilians.

The machine, thus simplified, would work under one Board instead of three, and become much less expensive, and much more efficient than it now is.

I have the honour to be, SIR,
Your most obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

THE FOLLOWING IS SIR EDWARD CODRINGTON'S REPORT ON THE GALATEA PADDLES.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty.

SIR, As the Galatea is now detached from my flag, and I am therefore not in the way of making any further trial of her paddles, I have the honour to refer the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to the remarks in my journal under date of the 12th of last month, in which they will observe, that in a very light air on the bow, and a slight ground swell, which, in some measure increased the difficulty, she towed the Caledonia at the rate of one mile in the hour; and that afterwards, when the ship was kept away so as to

have the same light air on the beam, she towed the Caledonia at the rate of one mile and a quarter in the hour.

I am, SIR,

Your most obedient servant,

E. CODRINGTON.

October 4, 1831.

Monday, 12 September, 1831.

8 . 40, Galatea, by signal, quitted her station in the line, and gave way ahead with her paddles; 9 . 35, the Caledonian having furled sails, the Galatea took her in tow; at 10 . 5, the Caledonia stood out of the line, steering N. N E., in tow of the Galatea, paddling, Charybdes and Viper sweeping.

11 . 15 a. m. the Galatea discontinued paddling, and cast off the rope, with a light breeze on the bow, and scrubbed hammocks and washed clothes hanging in the rigging; the Galatea towed the Caledonia at the rate of a mile an hour, both ships' sails being furled.

Under the same circumstances, with a light air on the beam, she towed the Caledonia at the rate of a knot and two fathoms an hour.

Extracted from the Journal.

Extract of a Letter to Sir James Graham.

DEAR SIR, When I was last in town, I went to Woolwich to look at our large steam vessels, and I much fear they will not answer the end proposed.

The Dee is much too shallow, and the Rhadamanthus draws too much water, and will be too much by the head when the boiler and engines are in.

It does appear to me, that neither the Engineer who makes the engine, nor the Builders who construct the vessels, have the least idea of what is necessary to constitute a steam man-of-war; it is very evident, as long as the engines and boilers are exposed to shot they must be useless for the purposes of war; it would be just as reasonable to send a frigate, whose magazine was exposed, against a battery firing red hot shot, as a steamer, with her boilers exposed, against a ship firing cold shot. In the Galatea I should have had no difficulty in throwing half-a-dozen shot into them the first broadside. I see no necessity for this; it would be just as easy to secure the boilers as it is to secure the magazine, and if you will permit m

to fit one of them out, I should have no objection in showing the Builder and Engineer how the vessels and engine should be constructed and placed so as to render them secure. I doubt whether those we have built could ever be made efficient; but I would prevent any mistakes and waste of money in those that may be built in future. The vessels are all too shallow, either to house their boilers and engines as they ought to do, or to carry a sufficient quantity of fuel; no steam man-of-war should carry less than a month's coals, and nothing is more easy than to make them do so; the waste of room in them all is absurd, and no arrangement is made to reef their wheels when the full load of coal is on board; and to keep the vessel in a proper depth when the coal is nearly expended, the vessel ought to have a much deeper hold, and the boilers as low as possible*.

I do not know whether it would be possible to place the cylinder horizontal—that is a question for the maker: if it could be done, all the engines should be so constructed—if, however, that cannot be done, there would be no difficulty in constructing the framing of the engine, that supports the shaft, in such a manner that it would require many shots to destroy it; at present one is quite sufficient to disable the vessel.

It is impossible in a letter to point out how all this is to be done; but if I could see you on board a steam-boat half-an-hour, I should have no difficulty in showing you their defects, and how easy they might be remedied; and it was my intention, when last in town, to have proposed this to you, had not affairs been in such a state that you could not have attended to it. I have spoken to Sir Thomas Hardy and Admiral Dundas on the subject, and have urged them both to allow me to fit one out; but I fear there is some obstacle that I am not aware of.

I trust you will do me the justice of not supposing I am searching for a job for myself. I can assure you I am only actuated by a feeling to do good; many officers have been allowed to put their plans in execution, and even to build ships: now I do not pretend to this; all I wish is to put them in the way of building an efficient

* Twelve years after this I was allowed to build the Sidon, and she is arranged as I then proposed. What enormous sums of money would have been saved, had that permission been given when it was proposed.

ship, and had one been constructing at Portsmouth, I should have asked permission to superintend her fitting. I have had a great deal to do with steam-boats for many years, and have made them my study; and I fancy no officer in the service has paid so much attention to the subject as myself.

When the present King was Lord High Admiral, I pointed out to him how they should be built; and had my advice been followed on the Dee, she would have been a good ship.

I trust you will give the subject of this letter a fair consideration. Depend upon it, my dear Sir, it requires more knowledge of what constitutes a good steam vessel of war, than either the engineers, or builders have evinced; all they think of is to see the vessel go fast in the river Thames; how they are to answer for what they are intended never enters into their heads.

I have the honour to remain,
Your obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

May 30, 1832.

*** *No notice was taken of this.*

To Joseph Hume, Esq. M.P.

Sir, As I observe it is your intention to bring the last promotion before the House of Commons, I beg leave to furnish you with some statements which will enable you to do justice to the subject.

I shall confine myself entirely to the Navy, as probably some officer of the other profession may enlighten you on military matters.

When his present Majesty came to the throne, a promotion took place, which made the Lists as follows:—

Admirals	198
Captains	820
Commanders	907
Lieutenants	3559

Since which period the Lists were reduced to

Admirals	129
Captains	750
Commanders	823
Lieutenants	2994

On the 10th of January 1837, the promotion made them as follows:—

Admirals	161
Captains	702
Commanders	823
Lieutenants	2994

shewing a reduction, since the accession of his present Majesty, of no less than 804 officers on the Active List.

You very justly remark that there are officers sufficient for all the Navies in the world, but you do not tell the House of Commons, that out of the whole of the Admirals there are not more than twelve under sixty years of age; and in the last promotion not more than six. You do not tell them that on the Captains' List there are more than 150 above sixty, and perhaps as many more above fifty. You do not tell them that nearly half the Commanders are unfit for active service, and that if a fleet of fifty sail of the line was required, the Admiralty could not find Lieutenants sufficient to officer them.

There are few Admirals of sixty years of age fit to command the British fleets with that activity and energy that the country would expect, in the event of war; and let war come when it may, the officers in command of the different stations will exceed that age; and no Board of Admiralty could supersede them without it being considered a public disgrace. There are no doubt men of sixty, who are equal, both in body and mind, to command (and almost all men think themselves so), but I speak of men in general, and more particularly of those who have not been employed for many years, or even if employed, employed in a very different manner they would be in an active war.

Lord Nelson fought the battle of the Nile at thirty-nine, Copenhagen at forty-one, and was killed at forty-seven. Had he not been an Admiral till sixty, I much doubt whether you would have either heard of the Battle of the Nile, or Copenhagen; and the Battle of Trafalgar, most certainly, would not have been fought in the manner it was.

There is a great difference between the Command of a Fleet and a seat in the House of Commons; a man of sixty may talk to the House for two or three hours, though exposed to the wit, the sarcasm, and the yawns of his opponents, and still preserve his nerve and power of oratory, much beyond that age; but an Admiral, in

command of a fleet, has not only his enemy to look after, but he has charge of that fleet amongst rocks, shoals, lee-shores, storms, and tempests, and it requires youth and health to support him in all his difficulties.

Now, Sir, I shall examine the last promotion under two heads:—

1st—Was it necessary for the Service,

2nd—Was it an act of justice to Individuals.

For many years past, the system of promotion from Captain to Admiral has been by seniority; and I much doubt, whether any Ministry dare, under the present circumstances, change it; it could only be done by a recommendation of Parliament, which is not very likely to be obtained*. I shall, therefore, take things as they are. The responsibility of the Naval Service rests exclusively with the Admiralty, and they are bound to see that the officers they employ, are equal to their commands in peace or war. It is not enough to say such an officer will do well enough in peace; he will not have much hard work; he is almost always in harbour, and so on; a war may surprise us, and if any untoward accident should happen at the first brush, the indignation of the country would be so roused, that the Board of Admiralty would probably lose their heads.

The people of England have not been accustomed to see the defeat and capture of a fleet; woe be to our rulers, should such a misfortune befal us. Under the circumstances I have stated, the Admiralty have only one road before them—simply to state to the Queen, that the Admirals have become so old, that a promotion is absolutely necessary; the difficulty is, how low down the List they ought to go. On one hand, they have the claims of officers for length of service, and the necessity of getting at some tolerable young men; on the other hand, they have the fear of dissatisfying yourself and the economists, and of having a cry raised against them in the country.

What have they done?—They have taken a middle course, which has not brought forward young men, and they have displeased you just as much as if they had made the promotion efficient.

* Sir Robert Peel, on conceding a retired list, distinctly stated—that Her Majesty would reserve her undoubted right of selecting Captains for Admirals, when necessary: this was confirmed by Lord John Russell, and an Order in Council was subsequently passed.

I now come to the second consideration. Is it an act of justice to individuals or not?

The senior officer promoted had been thirty-five years a Captain, the junior thirty-two; the average length of service could not be under fifty years—their pay £260 a-year. Now, Sir, I ask you—I ask the House of Commons—I ask the People of England, to whom you are fond of appealing, whether that rank, and that pay, was a sufficient reward for officers who had devoted their whole life to the service of their country. Many of them had little more than their pay, and, probably, grown-up families to maintain, and they were not in a position to better their condition; they had their appearance as gentlemen, and their rank as officers to support, and this to be done on £260 a-year. You either are not aware of these facts, or you are riding your horse of economy and reform so hard, that he will break down under you.

You observe, that this promotion was made to support the aristocracy. Why, Sir, there are only six aristocratic names in the whole naval promotion, and God knows, the present Ministry have no great reason to support that body; they might, with more justice, be accused of a wish to gain over the Army and Navy to their way of thinking. But I will do them the justice of believing, that they found themselves imperatively called upon to recommend a promotion, both as necessary for the service, and as an act of justice to old officers. The present Ministry have many faults, no doubt, but surely that of dealing out promotion with too liberal a hand, is not one of them. I believe they have religiously abided by the regulation laid down by their predecessors of only promoting one in three from each list.

During Lord Melville's administration of naval affairs, promotion was so unnecessarily and unjustifiably great, that the War officers have been completely bowled out of the service by young men, who had entered since the peace; and the present Admiralty, I have no doubt, find it difficult in the extreme to do any thing like justice to them.

I shall now examine the case of the Captains promoted to that rank; seventy-five were removed from the list, and twenty-five have been placed on it; the senior had been a Commander twenty-six years, the junior six years; how far the selection of the Admiralty has been just I will not here examine. I know several who certainly

ought to have been included in it, but I presume a list of the most efficient old Commanders was placed before the Board, and they selected twenty-five who they thought had the most merit, or more probably who had the most friends at the Board. The twenty-five Lieutenants made Commanders, and the twenty-five Midshipmen were, I suppose, selected in the same manner; but be that as it may, the senior officer made Commander was a Lieutenant of twenty-four years standing, the junior eight years; all the Midshipmen, with the exception of one, who had been five years in a surveying-vessel, had passed in 1829 and previously, some even ten years prior. Now, Sir, I do not think that you, the House of Commons, or the Country, can possibly find fault with their length of service.

As to the Midshipmen, I declare that the Admiralty, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the Ministers, whosever fault it was, ought to take shame to themselves for having made so paltry a promotion. What zeal—what energy can be expected from midshipmen who are permitted to remain in that rank for upwards of twenty years? Why, Sir, we have midshipmen who are grandfathers, still passing on board a ship under the name of young gentlemen!

Had there been fifty Joseph Humes, instead of one, in the House of Commons, the Admiralty ought to have promoted at least one hundred midshipmen, and called upon all naval senators to state to the House whether they were correct or not in so doing.

You say you see no prospect of diminishing the Naval and Military Establishments. Are you aware that the Russians had twenty-eight sail of the line in the Baltic, the summer before last, ready for sea, and a squadron of eight sail, with a proportion of frigates and smaller vessels constantly cruizing, and we had not one frigate on the home station, and this at a time that we were permitting Spain to recruit in this country, and putting into execution the Quadruple Treaty, which could not be agreeable to Russia? What, Sir, was to have hindered her from transporting twenty thousand men to the assistance of Don Carlos, and placing him on the throne of Spain; marching afterwards to Lisbon; dethroning the Queen; re-embarking her troops, and returning to the Baltic; anchoring at Spithead, if thought proper; or going to the Mediterranean, and sweeping away our squadron? Absolutely nothing. And had the autocrat possessed the nerve, as I have no doubt he had the inclination, it would have been done; and France and England

would have been left to contend against all Europe, and fight the battle of freedom on French or Belgian ground, under a tory administration; for the heads of the Ministry, and perhaps your own, would most certainly have adorned the capital.

Last year the same Russian force was in the Baltic, and, against your opinion, eight sail of the line was added to the British fleet.

What squadron will be collected this summer is not in my power to say. At present we have only three first-rates as guard-ships, and three sail of the line, two of which are fitting for the flags of Sir Robert Stopford and Sir Charles Paget.

Now, Sir, when you bring forward your motion, you will know at least the actual state of the Navy; and in recommending economy, I have no doubt you will see the necessity of not allowing this country to be defenceless, particularly till the affair of the Vixen is settled.

Remember that we sent an army and a fleet to Copenhagen in a time of profound peace, and stole the Danish fleet, because we suspected there was an understanding between Denmark and France. Russia knows we have a treaty with the two Queens of Spain and Portugal, and she has a right to take the opposite side of the question if she pleases.

Relative to the promotion: the most advantageous thing you can do for the country and Navy is recommending the Ministers to allow all Captains within one hundred of the top of the List, and sixty years of age, to retire with the rank of Rear-Admirals, at £1 a-day: all Commanders unfit for service, to retire with the rank of Captain, on additional pay, and the same with Lieutenants. The House of Commons and the country will then see, without disguise, the number of efficient naval officers they can command in a state of emergency. Such a recommendation coming from you, I have no doubt would have more effect, and would give you more deserved popularity, than any motion you can bring forward this session; for be assured all sides are tired of your pounds, shillings, and pence, when they tend to impair the efficient force of the country.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

CHARLES NAPIER, Captain R.N.

Merchistoun Hall, Horndean,
February 28, 1837.

To the Right Honourable Earl Minto.

My Lord, "No nation, however desirous of peace, can "hope to escape occasional collisions with other powers; and the "soundest dictates of policy require that we should place ourselves "in a condition to assert our rights, if a resort to force should ever "become necessary.

"Our local situation, our long line of sea coast, indented by nume- "rous bays, with deep rivers opening into the interior, as well as our "extended and still-increasing commerce, point to the Navy as our "natural means of defence. It will in the end be found to be the "cheapest and most effectual; and now is the time, in a season of "peace, and with our overflowing revenue, that we can year after "year add to its strength, without increasing the burdens of the "people. It is your true policy; for your Navy will not only protect "your rich and flourishing commerce in distant seas, but will enable "you to reach and annoy your enemy, and will give to defence its "greatest efficacy, by meeting danger at a distance from home. "We shall more certainly preserve peace, when it is well understood "that we are prepared for war.

The above, my Lord, is an extract from General Jackson's fare-well address to his fellow-citizens, on resigning the Presidency of America. There is not one word in that extract, with the exception of "an overflowing revenue," that does not apply, in a tenfold degree, to Great Britain.

Let us examine, my Lord, whether we are following the line of policy so ably pointed out by General Jackson; whether we are in a condition to assert our rights, should it become necessary; whether we have, during a long peace, done one single act for the better encouragement of our naval officers and seamen; and whether we are prepared to meet danger at a distance from home, or even repel it at home.

I answer, no; and I will take a review of the whole Navy, to prove that I am correct in my assertion.

First. We have a list of 160 Admirals, the oldest of whom is above ninety, and the youngest fifty-five, or thereabouts; and I

believe I am correct in saying there are not above twelve under sixty, and very few employed under sixty-five.

A man made an Admiral at forty, in constant employment, with good health, good nerves, and of an active enterprising character, may hold good till sixty or upwards; but a man who has been on shore for a considerable number of years, unaccustomed to command, must have his nerves so much relaxed, that it is quite impossible he can command a fleet with the energy that is necessary at the commencement of a war; he may do well enough in peace, but war is quite another thing, and war will surprise us one day or other; and, depend upon it, my Lord, if we meet with reverses, there will be such a flame lit up throughout the country, that the Lord have mercy on the first Lord of the Admiralty for the time being.

The Navy is unlike the Army; the latter will not be called into immediate action; and if they are, they are regularly drilled and disciplined. In the Navy, every thing will be hurry-scurry; new officers, new men, *pressed men*, men raised against their will and forced to serve, guarded by undisciplined marines, newly entered and knowing nothing of their duty.

Secondly.—The greater number of the Captains employed last war, are old, and have been so neglected during the peace, that few are now fit for active service; but still their claims are so strong, that in the event of war, they must be employed, and many, with interest, will so press upon the Admiralty, that they will be employed whether fit or not. Many young men who have entered the service since the peace, will also be employed; and as their fitness cannot possibly be known at the Admiralty, we must lay our account, that all these having the greatest interest, will be the first in commission. A sufficient number of war-officers have not been brought forward to bring up the rising generation, and to ensure the employment of experienced men. When I speak of experienced men, I mean those who know the difference between a peace and war service.

Thirdly.—On the Commanders' list, there is not one-half of them fit for service; and of the two hundred youngest, there are only fifty who were Lieutenants last war; the rest were either Midshipmen, or have entered the service since the peace; that alone shows how little attention has been paid by the various First Lords, to the bringing forward a certain proportion of war-officers.

Fourthly.—With respect to the Lieutenants, it is a well known fact, that it is with the greatest difficulty the Admiralty can find enough to officer the ships on the peace establishment; and can it be expected that any officer, without interest, will serve with any zeal or pleasure? If he is on the seven shilling list, and not a First Lieutenant, he loses sixpence a-day, and receives his provisions for his services; if on the six shilling list, and not a First Lieutenant, he serves for sixpence and his provisions; and if a young Lieutenant, he has eighteen-pence, and his provisions for his services; he has neither honour or glory to acquire, and without interest, he has no promotion to expect; for should he be the first officer in the service, that is no recommendation whatever: as for the unfortunate Mates, they plod on, broken-hearted with disappointment; and when they are, at last, made Lieutenants, they will not serve if they can help it.

Fifthly.—With respect to the seamen, we are now in the twenty-third year of peace, and, with the exception of Sir James Graham's Registration Bill, no one measure has been adopted to ensure manning the fleet at the commencement of war. Recourse must be had to that infamous, oppressive, and most abominable of all measures—*impressment.* Your Lordship is not aware, nor is the country aware, of the extent of the evil, or it never would be tolerated for a moment. Should war take place to-morrow, and press-warrants be issued, the whole of the seamen would instantly disappear, and an immediate stop put to trade. Captains and officers, naturally anxious to man their ships, would be seen prowling about in the sea-ports at night to entrap any unfortunate fellow who might venture abroad. Houses where seamen were supposed to be concealed would be broken open in the most violent manner; resistance would be made on the part of the crimps and seamen; and scenes of riot and bloodshed would take place, disgraceful to a free country. Men would be torn from their wives and families, whether they were seamen or not, and secured on board the tender, and would no longer be heard of, unless they were found useless.

The worst characters are generally employed as press-gangs, and care little about either law or justice.

One would suppose, since such cruel measures were adopted to force men into the service, rewards would be given to induce them to remain. Not at all. Last war many men never set their foot on

shore: their pay was bad, and even when advanced to petty officers, the augmentation was so trifling, that many men preferred remaining as Ab's. When they came into port, instead of finding relaxation, they had harder work to perform. If abroad, they got no pay: if at home, they had the pay in one hand, and the topsail sheet in the other. The Jews and vagabonds of all descriptions were alone benefitted by it. Situations in the dockyards were rarely given to good men; their only hope was Greenwich Hospital, when no longer fit for service. At the conclusion of the war, a pension was given for fourteen years, of ninepence a-day, and one shilling for twenty-one years service; the former is now suppressed, and improvements have been made in the victualling, and in the manner of paying; but after twenty-two years deliberation at the Admiralty, nothing has been done, by any Board, for the permanent manning of the Navy.

Here follows a plan for a retired list for officers; but as it has been mentioned in a former Letter, it is needless to repeat it here; I shall, therefore, pass on to the seamen.

I shall now take into consideration the state of the seamen, which is a subject of much more importance, and of much more difficulty, than people are aware of. I have shown what the present system is, and I shall now show what it ought to be, though fully aware of the difficulty of getting people on shore to entertain the same view I take of it, and if entertaining it, to have courage to support it.

Steam has made, and is still making, such rapid progress, that the nursery for seamen is fast disappearing; and some legislative measures are absolutely necessary to keep up our naval supremacy. Sir James Graham's bill has laid the foundation for registering the seamen, and giving them an opportunity on the breaking out of war, but it does not go far enough, nor will it answer the end proposed. No man, who has not served in a man-of-war during peace, will voluntarily come forward to serve in war; their horror of confinement and discipline is much too great; we must, therefore, strike at the root of the evil, and at once oblige every lad who goes to sea, to serve a certain period in a ship-of-war, before he can become a privileged seaman.

I should therefore propose, that the number of apprentices for

each ship should be fixed at a tolerable high rate, and after serving an apprenticeship of four years in the Merchant Service, before they can become British seamen, they should be obliged to serve three years in a ship of war; this, I have no doubt, would be objected to, as encroaching on the liberty of the subject; but it bears no comparison to impressment; it merely amounts to this, that the Legislature, being desirous that this maritime country should possess the first seamen in the world, have decided, that no lad shall follow the sea-service, until he has gained experience, both in the Merchant Service, and in a ship of war. No force, whatever, should be used; the apprentice, at the end of four years, should be discharged from his ship, and he could not be received in another, until he had qualified himself in a ship of war; he might remain on shore if he thought proper, but to sea he should not go. I feel quite satisfied, that a very short time would suffice to reconcile, not only the seamen, but the country, to this arrangement.

During peace, three years' service should be required, and they should then have full liberty to serve in any merchant ship they thought proper. It will be seen at one glance, that the arrangement I propose would be the means of accustoming every seaman to the habits and customs of the Navy, and of teaching them gunnery, and other useful exercises, so that in the event of war, every man would be an experienced man-of-war seaman. According to our present system, there is only a certain set of men enter into the Navy, and after having served some time, they dislike the Merchant Service, and pretty generally go from one ship to another; but they form a very small proportion of British seamen; the greater number have a horror of a man-of-war; they like the freedom, the disorder, and, I may add, the filthy way they are brought up in a collier, and have no desire to change it.

If the plan I propose was adopted, a certain number of young lads being obliged to qualify every year, there would not be vacancies for all the men who presented themselves, and the comfort of a ship of war becoming known to all, there would be no want of seamen when an augmentation became necessary, particularly if proper encouragement was held out. I should make no alteration in the present pay of seamen, but I would give the second-class petty officers one-half more than an able seaman, and the first-

class double the seaman's pay. During peace, it would not be necessary to give a bounty, or any other encouragement.

Should war break out, the Government would be in possession, by means of the registration, of the number of seamen in the Mercantile Marine; and after having decided on what number were required, an order in Council should be issued, calling on all seamen, who had not served a stated time, to come forward, their term of service to be regulated by the number wanted.

Many would hold back for some time, I have no doubt; but as they could not go to the plough-tail, or get any other shore occupation, it is evident, their only means of gaining a living would be by joining the Navy. This is certainly impressment, but it is a much more gentle way of doing it than what I have described in a former part of this letter.

As this regulation would press hard on ship-owners, masters of vessels, and others, who had put their sons into the Merchant Service, with the view of bringing them up as masters and mates, they would probably make much opposition to such a regulation. I should, therefore, allow a fine, paid to Greenwich Hospital, to exempt them from serving the stated time in a ship-of-war. This would certainly be making fish of one and flesh of another; but there could be no hope of carrying such a measure through the House of Commons, without a clause of that sort.

When war broke out, the existing bounty should be given, and ten years' service, besides the three years' apprenticeship, should exempt them from any further call*. Should they, however, enter for five years more, they should receive another bounty and an increase of pay, and at the end of fifteen years a pension of ninepence a-day. Should they enter for another five years, they should receive another bounty and a further increase of pay, and on completing the time be entitled to a pension of a shilling a-day. No artisan of any description should be employed in a dock-yard or gun wharf, until he had served a certain period in a ship of war.

No labourer or policeman should be employed without the same qualification.

No waterman should be allowed to ply, either in London or elsewhere, till he had served his time in a ship of war.

* By Sir James Graham's act, they are entitled to a double bounty.

No person should hold the situation of porter in any naval department, either at the Admiralty or any other naval department, who had not been in the Navy.

I now come to a regulation which would strike at the root of ministerial patronage, as far as regards all the shore-going people employed in the public departments, and which even the present reforming ministry I have no doubt would fight against tooth and nail, and even scout at as being totally impossible—I mean the propriety of appointing naval officers, of all descriptions, who are qualified, and who wish to retire from active service, either on account of wounds or other causes, to fill the situation of clerks, &c. in all the naval departments.

Let that rule be once established, and we shall have no overburdened lists of Lieutenants, Pursers, Clerks, and Midshipmen.

This proposition will make a cry out, I have no doubt, in many quarters, and it would require some time to find men qualified for these situations: I would deprive no man of his present situation; but as vacancies occurred, they should be filled by men who had actively served the king, and who certainly have a greater right to a comfortable berth than civilians, who know nothing about the service.

Should these regulations be adopted the Admiralty would have abundance of opportunities of rewarding old and meritorious officers whom they could not promote; and our seamen, instead of going to America, would stay at home, and having completed their time in a ship of war, would man our merchant ships, and teach the young apprentices that there was nothing dreadful in the naval service, and that if they conducted themselves well they were sure to be rewarded.

I remain, your Lordship's obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER

Merchistoun, March 1837.

Extract of a Letter from Sir Charles Wood, in reply to my proposal to have an effective ship for the ordinary, which letter is mislaid.

Admiralty, December 19, 1832.

My DEAR SIR, I am much obliged to you for your letter.

I have sent for the Sun, and shall read with great interest your letter on impressment. No subject can be more important than the question of manning the Navy; and I shall be glad to see the development of the view of an able and practical officer like yourself.

The question of making the guardship of the ordinary an efficient ship, as you suggest*, to take the first relief, was well discussed at the time, and, upon the whole, I am inclined to think, rightly decided in the negative. * * * * *

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I quite agree with you, however, as to the greater use to be made of the crews of the ordinary in fitting ships, and unfitting (if there is such a word) on their return.

To the Secretary of the Naval and Military Commission.

Sir, A Commission being appointed to inquire into the state of the Army and Navy, I think it the duty of officers to lay before it any suggestions that may appear useful to assist them in satisfactorily fulfilling the duties entrusted to their charge; and, as I am sure, a Commission, composed as the present is of distinguished officers and civilians, without any regard to party feelings, will not view with dissatisfaction any suggestions that are respectfully submitted to them, I shall not hesitate to subscribe my name, which is always preferable to anonymous communications.

I shall confine myself to my own profession, making comparisons between it and the other when occasion may offer, but without any invidious feeling to our brothers in arms.

The first point to which I wish to draw the attention of the Commissioners, is the formation of the Board of Admiralty, for on that hinges the well-being of the whole Service.

I presume when the Admiralty was put in commission, it was in consequence of the power of the Lord High Admiral being too great to be entrusted to an individual, and probably thought too independent of the Minister of the Crown.

* This is at last in force at the different ports.

A Board was then formed, composed of a certain number of naval officers and civilians, with a cabinet minister at its head, who in course of time engrossed the whole of the patronage of the Navy, without incurring the responsibility.

It can easily be supposed, when patronage is vested in one irresponsible man, even if that man is not a cabinet minister, how difficult it must be to resist the pressing solicitations of the minister of the day, as well as of his political and private friends; but when the First Lord of the Admiralty is a cabinet minister, it must be evident, that almost all the patronage of the Navy must be used for political purposes, particularly during periods when parties are nearly balanced.

In time of war the evil attending this is of less importance, because there are always aspiring spirits, who, by their gallant deeds, bring themselves into notice, and take their place amongst men brought forward by powerful interest; but in peace, when few opportunities arise of men distinguishing themselves, it must be evident that interests, either private or political, must be the high road to promotion.

That men of interest may make as good officers as men without it, there cannot be a doubt; but young men, conscious of the certainty of promotion, are not called upon for the same exertions as those who have only their own merit to advance them in life.

Another evil attending the present system is, that officers of the Navy who wish to state their claims, or who feel themselves aggrieved, have no responsible person to apply to. It is quite true they can see the First Lord of the Admiralty once a year; but that First Lord is a civilian—a political chief, and is not a judge of officers' claims; and if he was a judge, the pressure upon him is so great, that he is obliged to steel his heart against them, even if he is convinced of their merit.

Officers can also wait on the other Lords once a week; but the only answer they can give, and the answer they always do give, is, that they will mention to the First Lord what has passed, and that the patronage is entirely in his hands*.

An officer may state his claims or his complaints to the Secretary of the Admiralty in writing; but he may rest assured that is not the way to get them redressed; for I never yet heard of a Lord of

* The Evidence before the Committee on Salaries confirms this.

the Admiralty or a Board remonstrating against either the promotions or appointments a First Lord thought proper to make; and it is well within my remembrance, when Sir Joseph Yorke was taunted by Mr. Croker in the House of Commons for not finding fault when he was in office, replying that if he had, his stern would have been turned to it next morning.

A naval officer has no person to whom he can speak officially. The junior Lords shelter themselves under the First Lord, and he again under the Board; and if you ask an advance it will be refused. I know at present many gallant officers who have been severely wounded in the service, and have been constant in their application for employment, receiving the dry unfeeling letter that their applications are noted for consideration at a favourable opportunity; that opportunity never comes; and when they come to the top of the list, they are superannuated, because they have never served.

Until the present moment, there never has been a commission to examine into the state of the two services; and I trust a strenuous effort will be now made to rescue the Navy from political thraldom, as well as to prevent the Army from falling into the state the sister-service is now so unfortunately in. The commission is composed of too many official people.

On the naval part, there is the existing First Lord and his naval adviser; a late First Lord, and his late adviser; another late First Lord; one professional man, and a late lay Lord—all of them men of considerable ability; but it can hardly be supposed, that men who have held the office of First Lord for a length of time, or who now hold it, can view the composition of the Board with perfect impartiality; they know, no doubt, the convenience of keeping it as a political machine; and they may very naturally think, that overbalanced the inconvenience; and although the Naval officers on the commission, who have been long in office, must be aware of the evils attending the system, they will not be very anxious to abolish it, one holding office under it, and another expecting ere long to do so.

I am aware I shall be met by the old story, that the Navy has gone on very well before, therefore let it alone. It is quite true, after establishing our superiority on the 1st of June, we held it throughout the war. But what was the reason? Not because the Navy of Great Britain was well governed, but because other Navies *were ill governed*. Foreign nations had no trade to make seamen,

and no opportunity of exercising their ships; but the moment the American war broke out we had to fight a Navy better disciplined than our own, and we were defeated, by superior force, it is true; but, be it remembered, we were most severely punished without inflicting any very great injury on our opponents. What followed? The French found out we were not invincible, and out of nine frigate actions, all well fought, there were four drawn battles. In another war we shall be in a very different position to what we were at the conclusion of the last; France, Russia and America, to say nothing of the smaller states, have made rapid strides in improvement, and we may rely upon it, that actions with either French or American ships will be no child's play.

In gun exercise we have improved, but in everything else we have gone back, and our ships, from being ill-manned, are very little superior to the French; our superior officers are old, theirs are all young, and parliamentary influence has not the same weight either in France or America as it has with us. Lord Collingwood (and he was no bad authority) complained in his letters, of line-of-battle ships not having more than two or three officers who knew their duty; if that was the case in war, how much more must it be now in peace. The discipline, the zeal, the energy, created by war, is gone by, and the generality of the young men of the present day who obtain promotion through powerful interest, consider themselves quite perfect, and the old officers are broken hearted and disappointed, and almost without hope of promotion.

Believing as I do that no permanent good can be done for the service until the Board of Admiralty is abolished, I shall point out what appears to me would be the best mode of ruling the Navy, although that step has not been taken.

I am of opinion that the Navy should be governed by a naval officer, not a cabinet minister, with the title of Lord High Admiral, Admiral of Britain, Commander-in-chief, or whatever title it is thought proper to give.

The whole of the patronage and responsibility should be vested in him; he should be assisted by two Flag officers, with the title of Vice and Rear Admiral of Great Britain (doing away the sinecures of that name), a Flag officer, or a Captain, with the title of Captain of the Fleet, a civilian, and two Secretaries, one a naval officer, and the other a civilian.

The Vice Admiral should superintend the Dockyard department, the Rear Admiral the Victualling and Medical branch, and the civilian the Accountant General.

All correspondence with either of these departments should go direct to them, and they should give their orders to their subordinates.

The Commander-in-chief's particular attention should be directed to the stationing the ships, the discipline, the promotion and appointment of officers, in which he should be assisted by the Captain of the Fleet and the naval Secretrary.

The civil Secretary should attend to the political part of the business, which should be only known to the Chief, whereas at present there are many transactions that ought to be secret, and which the whole Board are acquainted with, and in addition probably to half the clerks in the Admiralty.

The instructions to the different ports should be made by the Commander-in-chief, or by the Vice and Rear Admirals; they should hoist their flags, and examine minutely into their departments, and most particularly into the discipline of the ships, which can never be properly done by a Board in plain clothes, with a Secretary tacked to their tail, running hastily through all the departments, as they have hitherto done.

I remember perfectly well the impulse that was given to the service, when the late King was Lord High Admiral; he might, perhaps, have done too much, and might not have been prudent in his communications with the Government; but no apprehensions could be entertained of any difficulties arising between the Ministry and an Admiral, removeable at pleasure, but who ought most certainly not be removed with every change of ministry: at present not only the First Lord, but all the Admiralty are political partizans, and just as they begin to know their business, may be replaced by a fresh set, who have all their lessons to learn, and invariably entertain different opinions from their predecessors. Hence arise the constant changes that take place, ruinous to the discipline and well being of the service, and expensive to the country.

It may be thought great presumption in so humble an individual as myself, venturing to make suggestions to a Commission composed as the present is, with the Duke of Wellington at its head, but I do it from a conviction, that if things are allowed to continue in their present state, a great catastrophe will befal this country.

I shall, in a future letter, lay before the Commission my ideas relative to the state of naval officers, and what changes appear to me necessary, both in promotion and retirement.

I have the honour to be, SIR,
Your obedient humble servant,
April 27th, 1838. CHARLES NAPIER.

To the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melbourne.

MY LORD, The accompanying letter was written to the present Lord Spencer (when Lord Althorp)* some years ago. His Lordship was much pleased with the generality of my observations, but was averse to put himself forward on the subject.

I beg to forward it for your Lordship's consideration, and I trust you will give it a patient perusal. Other nations are making such exertions to improve their Navies, and to establish a systematic plan for manning them, that it appears to me absolutely necessary, that this country should do something, if we are to retain the dominion of the seas.

Registering the seamen has been lately brought into practice, but to do good, it must be carried further.

Your Lordship will observe, that my plan is to oblige every boy who follows the sea to serve an apprenticeship in a vessel of war; by so doing, at the commencement of hostilities, you would man the fleet with exercised and experienced seamen, who, having served in the Navy in their youth, would not have the same aversion to the service which the majority of merchant seamen now have, and who, when pressed into the service, would be totally undisciplined. There would no doubt be difficulties in carrying it out, because it would appear to encroach on the liberty of the subject in peace; but it only amounts to this, that the country, being desirous of obtaining the first seamen in the world, have decided, that instead of boys serving all their apprenticeship in the merchant service, a part should be served in a ship of war.

It has always appeared to me extraordinary, that different Governments, who must know the difficulties of manning the fleet in the

* Vide page 34.

event of war, have not, during a long peace, taken any step to do them away.

I beg to assure your Lordship, that I have no other motive in addressing the Prime Minister of this country, than a considerable anxiety for its safety, which I conscientiously believe will be in imminent danger in the event of war.

I have the honour to remain,
Your Lordship's obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, April 27, 1838.

To the Right Honourable Viscount Palmerston.

My dear Lord Palmerston, I am very glad that it is your intention to communicate my letter to your colleagues; since writing it, I observe the French are greatly strengthening their squadron in the Gulph of Mexico, and from the nature of their armament, there cannot be a doubt but they intend attacking St. John de Ulloa; if they merely meant to blockade the Mexican ports, a frigate and small craft are by far the best description of force for that purpose; but line-of-battle ships and bombs plainly indicate their inclination of attacking the castle and defences of Vera Cruz.

I have been twice there, and am quite certain, if they attack with boldness, they will take it. Many naval officers will disagree with me, but few know what ships can do, when well placed, against stone walls—Algiers for example.

Nobody thought the French would have forced the Tagus, because Sir Charles Cotton did not do it, after the battle of Vimeira—they did, and succeeded.

St. John de Ulloa is not so strong as St. Julian, and a ship can nearly touch the walls, and the Mexican soldiers are not fire-eaters.

I know the Admiral—he is young and enterprising; if he takes St. John de Ulloa, Vera Cruz will be at his mercy, and they may probably make a second Algiers of it.

I write this to your Lordship, because the castle is generally sup-

posed to be unattackable by sea, and thinking so, your Lordship might be lead astray.

I have the honour to be,
Your Lordship's obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, Horndean, August 28th, 1838.

To the Editor of the Sun.

Mr. Editor, I have read a pamphlet of One of the People, and the letter of a Stoker in the Hampshire Telegraph; they seem both written by the same person, who, if I mistake not, has a very comfortable fire to *stoke*, not far from Pall Mall.

He says, on the day Russia shows the least symptoms of sending her armada to Leith, or London, in one week 200 steamers, armed with sixty-eight and thirty-two pounders, will be at sea, and that every ship of the enemy will be towed into England by our steamers.

Dear Stoker, you really are a most wonderful man, and the sooner Her Majesty makes you Lord High Admiral the better. I will, however, venture to ask Mr. Stoker—how are we to ascertain when Russia shows signs of sending her armada to this country? If he will read Captain Crawford's pamphlet, he will see, that in 1836 the Russian fleet got under weigh, consisting of twenty-seven sail of the line, twenty frigates, and three corvettes; and had the Autocrat been disposed to serve us as we did the Danes, he certainly would not have sent us information; but the fleet would have sailed the first fair wind, and probably be the first to announce their arrival on our coast. I wish also to ask the Stoker whether he is really serious in believing—that in one week we could select and collect 200 steamers, strengthen them for guns, make magazines, provision them, store them, and man them with between 20,000 and 30,000 men, and then train them to fire shot and shells in one week?

Now if we can do all this, then "the Gentlemen of England may live at home at ease;" but if we cannot, England ought not to be left with less than ten sail of the line, which is all I proposed, and

which the Stoker, after all his rhodomontade, himself recommends.

I remain, your obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

September 10th, 1838.

To the Secretary of the Naval and Military Commission.

Sir, When we look back to the age of the officers who commanded the fleets in the great naval actions, when promotion was much quicker than it is at present, we shall find, with the exception of one or two cases, the Admirals had arrived at a time of life which made it quite impossible that their energies could be equal to the arduous service they were employed upon.

Lord Rodney became a Rear-Admiral at forty-seven, and fought his action at sixty-four; he was the first British Admiral who broke the enemy's line; and if we are to believe Sir Howard Douglas's statement in the controversy with Clark of Elden, there appears to have been great want of decision on the part of Lord Rodney, who was suffering at the time from gout; and it is very well known, that Lord Hood was displeased at the result of the action, and urged Lord Rodney to renew it.

Lord Howe was Commander of a squadron at thirty-three, and Rear-Admiral at forty-five; he fought the battle of the 1st June at sixty-eight; his second in command, Lord Graves, was the same age, and Lord Bridport sixty; he took six sail of the line, and allowed six or eight to escape under their spritsails. A man of his time of life was not equal to three days' fatigue of body and mind; had he been between thirty and forty, the greater part of the enemy's fleet would have been captured.

Lord St. Vincent became a Rear-Admiral at forty-three, and attacked the Spanish fleet, of very superior force, at sixty-three; but it was the youthful Nelson, who won the battle, by disobeying signals; in this case the superiority of the enemy was so great, that any man of any age would have been justified in declining a battle.

Lord Duncan was a Rear-Admiral at fifty, and fought the Camperdown action at sixty-six; he was certainly no common man: had

he been fifty he could not have borne down on an enemy's fleet on a lee shore with more nerve and decision.

Lord Nelson fought the battle of the Nile at thirty-nine, Copenhagen at forty-one, and Trafalgar at forty-seven; many men, of his age, would have done the same thing; but I doubt whether Lord Nelson himself, between sixty and seventy, would have attempted either the Nile or Copenhagen; and most certainly, at that time of life, he would not have fought the battle of Trafalgar in the way he did. He followed the plan of Duncan in his mode of attack, won the day, and captured twenty-three sail out of thirty-three; and had he fought the action at a distance from the land, not one ship would have returned to tell the story. He died at forty-seven, leaving a brilliant example to follow—but which example will never be followed by one man in a hundred, unless he has youth on his side.

Sir James Saumarez was defeated at forty-four, in a brilliant attack on a French squadron at Alguseiras, and in less than a week refitted his shattered squadron, attacked and defeated double his force, blew up two three-deckers, and captured a seventy-four. Had he been sixty-four instead of forty-four, it is more than probable neither action would have been fought.

Besides the actions I have enumerated, we lost many opportunities for want of decision; look at Lord Hotham's bungling actions in the Mediterranean, and Sir Robert Calder's foggy action; they were both too old, and quite incapable of fighting decisive battles.

The great error in most of our Naval battles, has been in not following them up: a victory once gained, our Commanders were quite satisfied with themselves, and I dont wonder at it; nothing is more agreeable than to find a battle won, and one's head on his shoulders; and nothing more disagreeable, than to renew a battle with impaired energies. If the command of our fleets has hitherto fallen into the hands of worn-out men, what must be the case in future? The youngest Captains, at the head of the list, are past fifty, and they were made Captains at seventeen and eighteen years old, which can never occur again; the greater number are upwards of sixty. Another promotion will probably not take place for five years; the youngest Captains will than be fifty-five or six, and the majority sixty, and each succeeding promotion they will be much older.

It must be evident to the Commission, that such a state of things ought not to be allowed to continue; and I only know of two reme-

dies, viz.—selection and retirement; the first is dangerous, because once permitted, it would be extremely difficult to guard it from abuse, whether we are governed by an Admiral, or Commander-in-chief.

As I presume the prerogative of the Crown cannot be interfered with, the power of selection must remain with the Admiralty; but as the First Lord engrosses the whole of the patronage, I much fear that, in course of time, he would find out that his relations and political friends were much more deserving than their neighbours, and entitled to be placed over the heads of their brother-officers; to prevent this, I only know one way, which is by permitting every Captain, of a certain standing—say ten or fifteen years, to petition the Admiralty for promotion. The petitioner should be summoned before the Board, produce his testimonials, and show that he had performed a series of services, which entitled him to be placed over the heads of his brother-officers.

The Admiralty should examine his documents most strictly, and also their own records, and if, in their opinion, he has made out his case, he should be promoted in the proportion of one in three—that is to say, two should be promoted by seniority, and one by choice.

The peace establishment of Admirals should be as follows, and filled up as vacancies occurred:—

1 Admiral of the Fleet
40 Admirals
50 Vice-Admirals
60 Rear-Admirals
100 Retired Rear-Admirals.

The names of the officers who substantiated their claims, as well as those who were rejected, should be published in the London Gazette, which would be encouragement to those who really had claims, and a salutary check on officers coming forward on slight grounds, and the name of every officer promoted by choice, should appear in the estimates, to justify the Admiralty for stepping out of the usual course.

The Retired List for Captains seems to be a very easy operation, depending entirely on what additional expense the Commissioners think the country ought to be put to *in common justice* to old officers; for when once the system of selection is admitted, the service will not be benefitted by a retirement.

I do not think it would be unreasonable to allow Captains of sixty, and within one hundred of the top of the List, to retire on £400 a-year, with the rank of Rear-Admiral; and those within two hundred, and the same age, with the rank of Commodore, on £300 a-year, limiting both lists to one hundred. This would give an immediate retirement to one hundred and forty Captains, at an expense of about £13000 a-year. The Active List would then be under control, and after a certain time, the Retired List would very considerably diminish, and relieve the pressure on the finances*.

At present there is no Retired List for Commanders; and it appears to me just to allow those within two hundred of the top of the list, more than fifty years of age, and who had commanded ships, to retire with the rank of Captain, on £250 a-year, and Commanders of the same age and standing, who had not commanded ships, on £200 a-year, limiting both lists to one hundred and fifty†. I make this distinction because it is generally thought that officers who have commanded are entitled to more consideration than those who have not; at the same time every just man must allow that it is a great hardship to refuse a man employment, and then punish him for not having served.

The Lieutenants' List is much more difficult to deal with, because on that list there are a great number who have avoided service. Actual servitude ought therefore to be the rate of retirement.

I beg to propose to the Commissioners to allow all Lieutenants above fifty, promoted previous to 1816, and who have served afloat, to retire with the rank of Commander on £150 a-year, and all who have not served afloat, to retire with the same rank on £120 a year, provided they had applied for employment, and not since evaded service: in that case they should retire on 6s. a day, and have no claim for further advance of half-pay. An immediate promotion of efficient Midshipmen should then take place, and in future no Midshipman should remain in that capacity after he had passed his examination. They become broken-hearted and disappointed, and instead of being active and zealous officers, they do their duty because it is their duty, but without either zeal or energy.

* A retired list was acceded to by Sir Robert Peel, with better pay than I proposed.

† This has not taken place, but is much wanted.

The service is, in consequence, materially injured, and the younger branches coming forward have a bad example before them, and each succeeding generation gets worse; and the Commissioners may rest assured, that it will be no easy matter to regenerate them.

Another point to which I beg to draw the attention of the Commissioners is, the regulations relative to wounds.

By the Queen's regulations, an officer must receive a wound equally prejudicial to the habit of body as the loss of a limb, to entitle him to a year's pay; but Her Majesty reserves to herself the right of granting annual pensions to officers whose wounds and services entitle them to consideration; but in direct opposition to that order in council, which is public, the Admiralty have been guided hitherto by a regulation of one hundred and fifty years old, which prohibits officers receiving pensions unless the wounds are equal to the loss of a limb, which regulation, I beg to submit to the Commissioners, is a breach of faith to men who enter the service under an order in council, without knowing anything about the Admiralty regulation made one hundred and fifty years ago.

I beg to state a case to the Commissioners, to show how improperly this regulation works.

I will suppose an officer receiving a severe wound attended by a compound fracture of the thigh bone, which shortens the limb a couple of inches. The Surveying Surgeons report that this severe wound renders the use of the limb very imperfect; on this report he neither gets pension nor gratuity. Should the same leg be again broken, and shortened two inches more, he would then probably receive a pension; but should the other leg be broken, and shortened two inches, he would be actually further from a pension than ever, because he would then be placed on an even heel, instead of being lopsided. This may appear absurd, but it is strictly true.

The Act 46 Geo. III. chap. 100, authorises Greenwich Hospital to grant pensions to Captains, Commanders, and Lieutenants, who are old, infirm, wounded, or disabled, and who shall not be provided for in Greenwich Hospital. That pension, till lately, was given to men who did not wish to serve, and who had interest enough to obtain it.

During Sir James Graham's administration, I pointed out to him the propriety of granting this pension to wounded officers who were not entitled by the Admiralty regulations to the royal pension; and

he, after due consideration, adopted my suggestion, and gave the patronage up to the Board of Admiralty; and in three instances it was given to wounded officers, without incapacitating them from serving. The present Board of Admiralty have thought proper to return to the old system, and made it a pauper and disqualifying pension, inasmuch as an officer is obliged to state his pecuniary position before he can get the pension.

I will show the commissioners how unjust this new regulation works; I will suppose two men of the same age and standing apply for this pension, one severely wounded, and the other not; the former full of zeal and energy, and the other without either one or the other. Which deserves the pension? Surely the wounded officer, because the wounded officer disdains to be disqualified from serving, and although already wounded, is ready to be wounded again, while the other is only to sit by his fireside. Who gets the pension? The latter officer. The Admiralty may urge against this that it will only be given to worn-out and infirm men; but I have seen it given to men just as fit for service as I am; and it is very probable the same thing will happen again.

There is no necessity to come on the finances to remedy this evil—the remedy is in the hands of the Admiralty, if they think fit to apply it. They have Greenwich Hospital Pensions; and, secondly, they have the funds arising from the abolition of the generals and colonels of marines.

I beg to suggest to the Commissioners, that officers, who have been either wounded or disabled in the service, should be preferred to others; for if such a regulation does not take place, I humbly submit that sooner or later both will be used to reward political and private friends.

The name of a good-service pensioner is obnoxious to every officer who is passed over, because it implies that his services are not so good as a junior officer, who may perhaps be preferred, because he has been less careful of his worldly concerns.

I have the honour to be,
With the greatest respect, your obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, March 23, 1839.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Minto.

My Lord, I have commanded the Powerful nearly a year, and have done all I can in that time to make her as perfect as the materials with which she is manned will admit; but she is still far from being what I could wish, or indeed to fight an action that a British man-of-war ought to do.

I apprehend we are as well manned as the generality of ships lately put in commission are, or likely to be; and I now write to your Lordship to endeavour to impress on your mind the absolute necessity of holding out more encouragement to seamen, if we are to retain the dominion of the seas; it is not with the crews we get now-a-days, that we can hope to maintain our preponderance. Your Lordship is aware of the opinions I have held on the propriety of full manning our ships, and also of holding out more encouragement to seamen; and I assure your Lordship, these opinions are greatly strengthened by the immense improvement I observe in the French ships. It is no part of my business to criticise the policy of keeping French and English so much together, as they have lately been, but I cannot shut my eyes to the consequences.

I am now lying alongside a French eighty-four, manned with 890 men, looking, both inside and out, as well as a British man-of-war, exercising their guns, and firing at a mark with as much precision as an English ship, and exercising their sails quite as well, even to shifting their top-sail-yards and sails; better found than our own ships are, with the exception of sails, and better armed in every respect; every gun fitted with detonating locks, that never miss, good muskets, good cartouch-boxes, and good pistols; men sufficient to work their guns, leaving a large proportion to small arms, and to attend to the sails, and a reserve of nearly 100 men below, to replace casualties, exercising and improving every day, with a system of promotion which encourages officers to excel each other to obtain it.

Now, my Lord, in spite of Admiral Fleming's celebrated speech at Stirling, when he told us we had seamen in the Mediterranean to man thirty sail of the line, and that we could fit a fleet out in a month; and in spite of the menace of Sir John Barrow, that an

officer who entertained opinions that we were inferior to other nations, did not deserve to get his *bit of bunting up*, I will endeavour to make a comparison between the ship I have spoken of and the Powerful: the latter mounts eighty-four guns, and is manned by 645 men, including sixty boys; when the guns are even imperfectly manned, there is not a single marine left to small-arms, not sufficient men for the passage of powder, very few to attend the rigging, and the guns fitted with locks not to be compared to the detonating ones.

Now, my Lord, I go into action with this ship; and with the precision both ships fire, and the addition of 100 muskets playing upon me from all quarters, I cannot expect to lose less than 100 men in killed and wounded, the first five minutes; admitting the enemy have double, which is not likely, I am reduced to 545 men and boys, the other to 690; my fire must slacken, while his, from replacing the casualties from his reserve, and from the musketry, if necessary, will be as lively as ever. Let me ask your Lordship—what chance should I have of taking my opponent?

Is it because we speak English and they speak French? for I know of no other reason. We all know the French are brave men; we know, that though we took them last war, they never did surrender till after great loss; and in the last year of the war, several actions were undecided; and at that time their experience was nothing in comparison to what it now is: every exertion is made by the French Government to improve their Navy, and it is wonderful to what a point they have arrived, and are still advancing.

It may be urged, that we are at peace, and that it is not necessary to be prepared for war; but, my Lord, France has now in the Mediterranean fourteen sail of the line, two of which are three-deckers, and the rest heavy ships; we have twelve, half of which are small seventy-fours; it would require 1500 men to complete them to the war establishment—where are we to get them in a hurry, should they be wanted? An action might be fought, and we might be defeated, before they arrived. What a state would England be then in! and how would we regain the superiority?—perhaps never. I am no alarmist, my Lord, but I cannot shut my eyes, and I think it my duty to convey to you my opinions.

Another point to which I wish to draw your Lordship's attention,

is to our arms; we are allowed on this ship only 130 muskets, and we cannot calculate on more than two-thirds of them going off; our pistols are in the same state, and as for our cartouch-boxes, the most uncivilized nations are all better provided for*. Should it be necessary to land a large force of seamen, they would not be half armed, and one-third of their arms would probably miss fire.

I have the honour to remain,
Your Lordship's most obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

Powerful, Vourla Bay, December 4, 1839.

To Rear-Admiral Sir William Parker.

My dear Admiral, I observe the Commissioners have finished their labours, and I cannot say they have done much for the naval service; but they have done just as much as I expected; what they recommend for the Commanders is not worth the materials on which the report is written.

They have done justice to the Lieutenants who serve, tolerably well for the Masters, and very well for the Surgeons, but the recommendation of giving half-pay to the Midshipmen, is telling a great many they are not to expect promotion; they have little encouragement at present to do their duty with zeal, this arrangement will give them less. Doing away the present Admirals' retired list I think is a wise measure, for it was uselessly wounding the feelings of old officers, who had not interest to get employed; but I would have carried it further as regards the pay. I do not see why flag-officers, who do not serve as such, should be entitled to the same pay with those who do. I would have given them a slight augmentation, and that would have put them on a better footing than those who had not served their time as Captains.

It is to be regretted since a retired list was not given to Captains, that the selection to Flags, in the proportion of one in three, had

* Both muskets and cartouch-boxes have been much improved since I wrote this letter.

not been recommended. Look at the age of the French Admirals and ours: be assured some mischief will happen some day or other. At the beginning of the revolutionary war, you may remember how the young French Generals beat all the old Austrian ones; and we had better take care the young French Admirals do not serve us the same.

The French are at sea, exercising: I believe we go out next week—it is high time. We passed a Midshipman the other day who could only show fifteen months' sea log: few can show more.

Believe me, MY DEAR ADMIRAL,

Yours, truly,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Vourla, May 19, 1840.

To the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel.

SIR, As you have announced that Her Most Gracious Majesty has charged you with the formation of a Government, I beg to submit to you the substance of a letter I had the honour of writing to the Naval and Military Commission, on the government of the Navy.

The first point to which I beg to draw your attention, is the formation of the Board of Admiralty; for on that hinges the well-being of the whole service.

I presume when the Admiralty was first put in commission, it was in consequence of the power of the Lord High Admiral being considered too great to be entrusted to an individual, and probably thought too independent of the Minister of the day: a Board was then formed of a certain number of naval officers and civilians, with a Cabinet Minister at its head, who in course of time engrossed the whole of the patronage of the Navy, without incurring the responsibility.

It can easily be supposed, when patronage is invested in one man, even if that man is not a Cabinet Minister, how difficult it must be to resist the pressing solicitations of the Minister of the day, and also of his political and private friends; but when the First Lord of the Admiralty is a Cabinet Minister, it must be evident to all impartial men, that the greater part of the patron-

age of the Navy must be used for political purposes, particularly during periods when parties are nearly balanced.

In time of war the evil attending this might be of less importance, because there would always be aspiring spirits, who by their gallant deeds would bring themselves into notice, and take their places amongst men brought forward by powerful interest; but in peace, when few opportunities arise of men distinguishing themselves, it must be evident that interest, either private or political, must be the high road to promotion. Be assured, sir, the road of merit is rough and uneven, and it requires many years and much luck to arrive by such a route to honour and distinction; it is not a railroad, sir, nor is it even macadamised.

That men of interest *may* make as good officers as men without it, there cannot be a doubt; but young men conscious of the certainty of promotion, are not called upon for the same exertions as those who have only their own merit to advance them in life.

Another evil arising from the present system, is, that naval officers, who wish to state their claims, and who feel themselves aggrieved, have no responsible person to apply to. It is quite true, they can see the First Lord of the Admiralty once a year; but that Lord is a civilian, a political chief, and cannot be a judge of the officers' claims; and if he was a judge, he can neither enter into them or into their feelings; the pressure from without is so great, that he is obliged to steel his heart against them, even if convinced of their merit.

Officers can also wait on the junior Lords of the Admiralty once a week; but the only answer they can give, and the answer they always do give, is, that they will mention to the first Lord what has passed, but that the patronage is entirely in his hands.

An officer may also state his claims, or his complaints, to the Secretary of the Admiralty, in writing; but he may rest assured that is not the way to get them redressed, for I never yet heard of a Board of Admiralty, or a Lord of the Admiralty, remonstrating against either the promotions or the appointments a First Lord thought proper to make; and it is well within my recollection, when the late Sir Joseph Yorke was taunted by Mr. Croker, in the House of Commons, for not finding fault with the measures of the Admiralty, when he had a seat at the Board, replying "that if he had, his stern would have been turned to it next morning."

Vide Captain Berkley, in his endeavour to get the Navy properly manned.

An Army officer can address himself officially, either by letter, or in person, to the Commander-in-Chief, or the military secretary. A naval officer has no person to whom he can speak officially; the junior Lords shelter themselves under the first Lord, and he again shelters himself under the Board; and if he asks an audience of them, it will be refused.

I know many gallant officers (officers who are well known in the service), who have been constant in their application for employment, receiving the dry, unfeeling letter from the First Lord, or his secretary, "that their application is noted for consideration at a favourable opportunity," and which favourable opportunity never arrives. Men who have sat at the Board, are quite sensible of the injustice First Lords are obliged to commit every day; but I have never known one step forward, and recommend that the Navy should be ruled as the Army is, by a permanent Commander-in-Chief.

I beg to assure you, sir, that I am actuated by no private feeling; you can neither do me good nor harm; but I have a strong sense of public duty, and a wish for the welfare of the country, and naturally in an especial degree for the Navy; and I consider both will be brought into imminent danger if the present system continues.

I am aware I shall be met by the old story—"That the Navy has gone on very well before, therefore let it alone." It is quite true, after establishing our superiority on the 1st of June 1794, we held it throughout the war; but what was the reason?—not because the Navy of Great Britain was well governed, but because other Navies were ill governed. Foreign nations had no trade to make seamen, and no opportunity to exercise their ships; but the moment the American war broke out, we had to fight a Navy better disciplined than our own, and we were defeated, *by superior force it is true;* but, be it remembered, we were most severely punished, without inflicting any serious injury on our opponents.

What followed?—the French found out we were not invincible, and out of nine frigate actions, all well fought, there were four drawn battles.

In another war we shall be in a very different position to what we were at the conclusion of the last. France, Russia, and

America, to say nothing of the smaller states, have made rapid strides in improvement, and we may rely upon it, that actions with either French or American ships will be no child's play.

In gun exercise we have improved, and so have other nations; but in everything else we have gone back; and our ships, from being ill manned, and ill found, are very little superior to the French. Our superior officers are all old—theirs are all young; and parliamentary influence has not the same weight, either in France or America, as it has with us. No man, who knows anything about his profession, can view our present position with indifference; and when we see a French fleet sailing about the Mediterranean, and Russian fleets in the Baltic and Black Seas, M'Leod in prison for obeying the order of his Government, and the Boundary Question still unsettled, no man can tell how long we may be allowed to remain at peace; and no naval officer, who served during the last war, and has served in the peace, can look forward to a struggle with perfect confidence. Lord Collingwood (and he was no bad authority) complained in his letters of line-of-battle ships not having more than two or three officers who knew their duty. If that was the case in war, how much worse must it be in peace. The generality of the young men of the present day, who obtain promotion through powerful interest, consider themselves quite perfect, and the old officers are broken-hearted and disappointed, and almost without the hope of promotion.

I have been forty-one years in the service; and, with the exception of Commanders of sloops, First-Lieutenants, senior Midshipmen of ships of the line and frigates, being promoted in consequence of the capture of a superior or equal force, I have seldom observed anything like common justice in the distribution of promotion. First-Lieutenants might be the best and most zealous officers in the service—that seldom was a sufficient recommendation for promotion.

Captains performing dashing services on an enemy's coast, if influential men, could generally bring an officer forward; but even then, it depended more on the interest of the Captain than on the nature of the enterprise performed. Nevertheless, in the stirring times of war, there was always hope; and young men without interest looked forward to some lucky chance for promotion. If under all these circumstances it is true, (and it admits

not of a doubt) that good officers were not every day to be met with, can we be surprised that the Navy should now be glutted with inexperienced young men, many of whom have been brought up in ships at anchor, and have never seen a gale of wind in their lives?

Believing, as I do, that no permanent good can be done the Service until the Board of Admiralty is abolished, I shall point out what appears to me would be the best mode of administering the Navy after that step has been taken.

I am of opinion that the Navy should be ruled by a naval officer, not a cabinet minister, with the title of Admiral of Great Britain, (that of Lord High Admiral being, perhaps, too high for any person under royalty). The whole of the patronage and responsibility should be vested in him. He should be assisted by two flag officers, with the title of Vice and Rear Admiral of Great Britain, (doing away with the two sinecures of that name,) a flag officer or a Captain, with the title of Captain of the Fleet, a civilian, and two Secretaries, one a naval officer, and the other a civilian.

The Vice-Admiral should superintend the dock-yard departments; the Rear-Admiral the victualling and medical branch; and the civilian the Accountant-General's department. All correspondence with either of these departments should go direct to them, and they should give their orders to the Surveyor, Store-Keeper-General, Physician of the Fleet, and Comptroller of Victualling.

The Admiral of Great Britain would, of course, consult with them when he thought it necessary, and give what directions he thought proper. But his attention would be particularly directed to the stationing of the ships, the promotion and appointment of officers, in which he would be assisted by the Captain of the fleet, and his naval secretary.

The civil secretary should attend to the political part of the business, which should only be known to the Admiral and himself; whereas, at present, there are many transactions, that ought to be secret, with which the whole Board are acquainted, and in addition to them, perhaps, one-half of the clerks in the Admiralty.

The inspections at the different ports should be made by the Admiral, and the Vice or Rear-Admiral; they should hoist their flags,

and examine minutely into their departments, and most particularly into the discipline of the ships, which never can be properly done by a board in plain clothes, with a secretary tacked to their tail, running hastily through the departments in the manner they have hitherto done.

I remember perfectly well the impulse that was given to the service, when the late King was Lord High Admiral; he might, perhaps, have done too much, and might not have been prudent in his communications with the Government; but no apprehension could be entertained of any difficulties between the Ministry and an Admiral who could be removed at pleasure, but who ought most certainly not to be removed with every change of ministry. At present, not only the First Lord, but all the Board, are political partisans; and just as they begin to know their business, they are replaced by a fresh set, who have their lessons to learn, and invariably entertain different notions from their predecessors; hence arise the constant changes that take place, ruinous to the discipline and the well-being of the service, and expensive to the country.

It may be thought great presumption in so humble an individual as myself, making suggestions to a Prime Minister about to form his administration; but I do it from a conviction that if things are allowed to continue in their present state, a great catastrophe will befal this country.

You, sir, are placed in a position supported by a very large majority; you may almost do what you please; and I venture to say, if you adopt the suggestions I have proposed, you will give satisfaction to the country, and to the Navy. They are a powerful body, almost all on the Conservative side, and their opinions ought not to be disregarded. I know, sir, a minister may hesitate to adopt my views, fearing to lose the patronage of the Navy; he may also have difficulties with his political friends, who aspire to the place of first Lord of the Admiralty; but, sir, Mr. Canning broke through all these difficulties, and I see no reason why Sir Robert Peel should not follow his example.

There is no difficulty, sir, in choosing the man; the whole service could lay their finger on him; he is one of your own politics, and no one will find fault if you choose them all from the same school. It would certainly be better if it was not so; but I

am not unreasonable enough to expect, on the first experiment, that you should trust that power to men of a different political creed from yourself.

I have the honour to be, SIR,
Your humble, obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

—— 1841.

To the Right Honourable Lord Ellenborough.

MY LORD, I do not see how I can, with any consistency, move for the rescinding the order for the papers I have moved for. I am deeply impressed with the belief, that, constituted as the Admiralty now is, we shall go on committing all sorts of errors in ship building.

I have been forty-six years in the service, and during all that time, the only improvement I see is in the size of our ships. If your Lordship will look at the Return of the Experimental Squadron, you will see that the Albion rolled over forty-five degrees, the Superb and Vanguard, forty and forty-two: at the same time, the Rodney was rolling to twenty-seven: the Return of the Canopus is not given in: they are absolutely unsafe, for if they fall into the trough of a sea at the time another rises to windward, I verily believe they would go over. Even as to sailing when full stored and provisioned, they did nothing extraordinary. And what is to be done with all those on the stocks? God only knows: for it would be madness to go on with them. Even the Queen cannot be depended on; and it was most unwise in the Admiralty not sending her out*. The Trafalgar, it appeared, rolled over eight degrees each way, except once, when she lurched to thirteen degrees.

The Queen going to twenty-three degrees marked as the third cruize, is a mistake: she was not out. The Albion and Superb do not give the weather roll; but it appears the Vanguard passed through 62 degrees; the third cruize, the Albion had only in 595 tons weight, height of ports six feet nine inches; whereas the Rodney, with 714½ tons, carried her ports eight feet. What the large frigates are to do I do not know; but Sir George Cockburn can tell you what the Vernon did; everybody knows what the Peak can do; and your Lordship can judge

* The Queen has been well reported on since.

yourself of the Cambrian. As for the steamers, they are still worse. The steam sloops vary from 763 tons to 1111 tons. I do not believe there is one that the least pains has been taken to secure their boilers and machinery from shot, and there is little difference in their force; they all carry little fuel, and are a great deal too deep; and I doubt the propriety of building a steam sloop of larger dimensions than 800 tons. Seventeen years ago, I wrote to the Lord High Admiral, pointing out what a steam ship ought to be, and I have repeated it often without effect, and I have no doubt my letters may be found at the Admiralt,y and if not, my letter-book is full of them; and if my advice had been then followed, we should have mustered a good steam Navy. I did not write from theory; several years before I had built six steamers, and my experience cost me upwards of £10,000.

The Gorgon was built for a frigate, with main-deck ports, and ringbolts for guns, but could not carry them; this was twelve or fourteen years ago: she was followed by seven others, from 1195 tons to 1299 tons, miscalled frigates, not one capable of carrying guns on the main deck; the machinery and boilers exposed, carrying few coals, not better armed than the sloops, and all too deep. I pointed out the state of the Dragon, Centaur, and I think the Avenger, before it was too late, to Sir George Cockburn, and, in my presence, he desired Mr. Corry to order them to be altered. Why it was not done, I know not.

I now come to what is called the first-class frigates—Avenger, 1144 tons, no guns on her main deck; what coals she carries, or how her machinery is placed, I know not. The Retribution is the last, and, by all accounts, the worst; she is 1640 tons, and carries 500 tons of coals; machinery and boilers quite exposed parts—I think fifty-four inches above the water; paddles too deep, and little more force than a sloop*.

Then comes the Terrible, of 1830 tons and 800-horse power, and 500 tons of coals. I have not seen her since fully stored; but though a committee of ship-builders had been sitting a long time to settle the plan of a stern, they actually forgot to give her stern ports, or at least they cut them close up to the deck, and afterwards were obliged to cut down the counter; and even now with a gun eleven and a half feet long, the muzzles are only one inch outside the sills of the port, and the bow guns are inside, and as to quarter

* Her large engines have been replaced by others of 400-horse power; and she now mounts twenty-six guns, and, I hear, answers well, but is not fast.

ports she has none. The Penelope will now be acknowledged to be a failure, as they have not cut down any more frigates. I recommended the faults of the Terrible to be corrected before she was launched, but was not attended to. We are now building six screw steamers, and I very much doubt the propriety of running headlong into this system, without trying one; for I do not consider the Rattler a sufficient trial, and the Phœnix goes slower than she did with paddles. As for the steam guard ships, I very much doubt the utility or policy of such a measure.

The Terrible, Retribution, and Avenger, have given up paddle boxes; but without them a steamer is not efficient.

I have gone at length into the subject with your Lordship, because it is very probable all this has not been communicated to you, and I have repeatedly made the same statement to the House, and have moved for a committee, or commission, to inquire into the state of the steam Navy, and have been met by an accusation of exaggeration. The fault of the construction rests with the Surveyor; but, I hold, the size and arrangement with the Admiralty, who do not give that attention to the subject that is requisite; indeed no one could do it, unless his whole mind was wrapped up in it, and it is for that reason that I intend to bring in a bill to change the system; and I am bound to show, by documents, that I am borne out in what I state, and not to be accused of exaggeration.

Your Lordship need be under no apprehension about the French and Americans being enlightened; be assured they know the state of our steam Navy better than ourselves; and I think it high time the House of Commons should know how the money is spent before they vote more for a steam Navy.

Your Lordship says "if I come to the Admiralty I shall get all the information I want." I know by experience the inutility of going there; there is no disposition in any Admiralty to attend to the opinions of officers—it is thought impertinent, and thousands of excellent things are thrown away for want of examination. I was asked to build a steamer after seventeen years pointing out their faults; it was twenty-five years before I could get the least attention paid to the registration bill, and if Mr. Sydney Herbert had not been at the Admiralty, it would not now have been in operation, and I dont know how long it will take to get it amended. Your Lordship must be quite well aware that I have no other object but the public good.

It is certainly not my interest to say anything unpleasant to the Admiralty; had I held my tongue last year, I should certainly have commanded the Experimental Squadron; but I consider it my duty to do all I can to mend matters, and it is only by exposing faults I can arrive at that.

I hope your Lordship will excuse this long letter, which, of course, is not personal to yourself; you have had nothing to do with the blunders that have been committed these last sixteen years, and I feel satisfied no new ones will be committed if it rests with your Lordship; and I can truly say I will be at all times both ready and willing to be of use to your Lordship, for I have no politics with the Navy, and would much sooner prevent faults from being committed, than expose them.

I have the honour to remain, My Lord,
Your most obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

April 10, 1846.

To Lord John Russell.

My Lord, When Lord Mulgrave, a General in the army, was First Lord of the Admiralty, the late Lord Melville, conceiving that the affairs of the Navy were not properly administered, addressed a letter to the Prime Minister, rightly judging that he was responsible to the country for the acts of his subordinates. It is for this same reason that I now address your Lordship. For six years that I sat in the House of Commons, I endeavoured to draw the attention of Government and of Parliament, and, through them, of the country, to the enormous waste of public money in the Naval Department, and, more especially, in the construction of steam ships of war: the then Board of Admiralty, and their predecessors, being equally culpable, successfully resisted all inquiry; and, on one occasion, when I warned them of the folly of building five or six iron steamers without trying one, I was met by the Secretary exultingly exclaiming, "We are building forty!"

When your Lordship came into office, you found it necessary to propose an addition to the Income Tax: then, and not till then, were the eyes of the House of Commons opened, and they

clamorously called for a committee on naval and military expenditure.

Your Lordship acceded, a committee was appointed, and they began with the Navy. On this committee there was not one naval officer; but there were many interested in preventing the truth coming before the country. Nevertheless, a tolerable *exposé* was made of the manner the public money had been wasted.

I shall not enter now into the whole of the report on naval matters, but will confine myself to what I consider the most important point, because it is the one on which the safety of the country depends—I mean steam.

After a long and patient investigation, it was discovered, that in no instance since the formation of a steam-marine, had the constructor of the ship, the maker of the engines, and the seaman, been brought together to consult on one of the most difficult points of naval architecture. It never entered into the heads of the Admiralty, the constructor of the vessel, or the maker of the engines, that a steam vessel of war was comparatively useless, unless her engines, and, above all, her boilers, were protected from enemies' shot; nor did they even think that it was necessary to have the main-deck ports in frigates sufficiently high to use their guns, when loaded even with the small proportion of coals they were enabled to carry: the main deck was, in consequence never armed; but, nevertheless, the committee of the House of Commons reported that we had twenty steam frigates, when I shall shortly show we have only three.

Publicly and privately, for nearly twenty years, with all Admiralties and all parties, I in vain endeavoured to correct these evils. Although I had more experience in the construction of steam vessels than most naval officers, I had not the presumption to suppose that all my views were correct: all I asked at different times, in and out of Parliament, was the appointment of a committee of naval officers and engineers, to weigh well all the difficulties, and come to some system, instead of groping in the dark, and wasting the public money.

All my efforts were useless, till, in 1825, Sir G. Cockburn, with, I believe, the sanction of Sir R. Peel, invited me to build a steam frigate, which after much consideration, I undertook to do, and chose for my builder, Mr. Fincham, and for the engine

maker, Mr. Seaward. Plans were drawn of the ships and engines; the builder and the engineer were brought together; the plans were considered and reconsidered for months; officers who had commanded steam vessels of war and steam merchant ships were consulted; and, finally, the Sidon determined on.

The great difficulty in steam vessels of war is the stowage. Hitherto, the proportion of coals to the horse power had been too small; and even then, when full, the wheels were buried in the water, and the frigates were incapable of carrying their main-deck guns, and thus became only overgrown corvettes, mounting six or eight guns—miscalled frigates, because commanded by Post-Captains.

In the Sidon those evils were corrected; she carries upwards of 700 tons of coals*; her main-deck ports were nearly seven feet out of the water, and a complete armament of fourteen guns, 32-pounders, in her main, and four 68-pounders in the upper, which are now being changed to twenty-two 68-pounders, having a clear main deck, with the exception of the shaft, the boiler and engines below the water line; the coal-boxes so fitted, that when the coals are expended, water ballast is taken in to prevent the wheels being too much out of the water; but, notwithstanding all the care and attention, the Sidon was by no means perfect, and, in the first instance, required considerable alteration in the machinery. A plan, proposed by Mr. Seaward, to work the starting gear and the eccentrics below the water line, failed, and was obliged to be changed, and her boilers were much too small to produce steam; in fact, though propelled by an engine of 560-horse power, the boilers were only equal to 350; she is now about being supplied with boilers of larger dimensions. Before the Sidon was built, the Terrible and Retribution were produced: the former of 1840 tons and 800-horse power, scarcely stowing 500 tons of coals, a large part of which occupies the main deck, and the boiler and engines take up the greater part of the hold and lower deck: she carries a good armament, but her bow and stern are so badly arranged, that the longest guns that could be found were put in her, and even then they were so far inside the cells of

* She has lost upwards of seventy tons of coals since she got new boilers. Had my advice been attended to, she would not have lost half that quantity; but it may be made up by taking a quantity on the main deck in sacks, without interfering with the guns.

the port, that they were fired with great difficulty and danger, and the aft guns occupy the greater part of the Captain's cabin. This vessel has great speed, and sails well; but she has neither room for troops or stores, and is rather an expensive advice boat.

The Retribution is 1680 tons, with an 800-horse engine; carries no main-deck guns; and is so inefficient that her power is about to be reduced to 400-horse*. The Sidon was followed by the Odin, of nearly the same dimensions and the same horse power, but two feet nine inches less depth of hold. She carries little more than half the coal, fewer guns, and these guns too low. Her main deck is not clear. The lines of both are the same, with long flat floors, and they have proved themselves excellent sea boats. Captain Henderson's evidence may be seen in the Committee on Merchant Steamers.

About the time the Odin was ready for sea, I was appointed to command the Channel Squadron. The Sidon, Odin, Dragon, Avenger, Stromboli, and Vixen, were put under my orders, with coals in proportion to the horse power. The Odin was first; Sidon second; and Dragon and Avenger nearly alike. With 700 tons of coals in Sidon, and about half in Odin, the latter beat Sidon a mile an hour. Both were so steady they could work their large guns in a heavy swell with ease: the others, with the exception of the Dragon, could not cast them loose. Before the trials, I suggested that the construction of the Leopard should be suspended, which was acceded to; *but owing to want of concert, the engines were forgotten, and they were finished, though the vessel is still in frame.* After the trials were over, I urged the Admiralty to make the Leopard an improved Sidon, by adding a foot to her breadth and ten to her length; but, by some unfortunate fatality, their Lordships took a middle course, and, instead of her being superior to both, she will be better than the Odin, and inferior to the Sidon, and the engines will require to be raised at least a foot to make them agree with the vessel, thereby losing the advantage of being under the water line; and, strange as it may appear, at the very moment I am writing, and notwithstanding the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, of the want of concert between the shipbuilder and the engineer,

* The Retribution is now ready, and can mount twenty-six guns. She was so badly fitted at Woolwich, that she went into the hands of the dockyard on her arrival at Portsmouth.

they have never been, to this moment, brought officially together; and, what is still more extraordinary, the Surveyor of the Navy has not the power of summoning them into his presence, and pointing out what is necessary to constitute a steam ship of war*.

During the two years I commanded the Channel Squadron, no less than twenty-nine steamers passed through my hands. They have all been tried in every possible way, reports have been made upon them, and an elaborate table, describing both vessels and engines to the most minute parts, submitted to the Admiralty; but, notwithstanding, we are still working in the dark, and the four or five steamers now on the stocks will be little more efficient than those already in the water. They are too large for corvettes, and too small for frigates; the depth of hold is the same in the Odin, and though it has been proved that the Odin can carry main-deck guns, these new vessels, though within a few tons of the Sidon, are positively being constructed without main-deck ports†. I have before stated that the Committee of the House of Commons reported that we had twenty steam frigates. Where are they? We have three—the Terrible, Sidon, and Odin: all the rest are steam corvettes, mounting six guns, commanded by Post Captains, and misnamed frigates. Even the Penelope, a lengthened frigate, has been obliged to give up her main-deck guns.

In addition to these, we have three line-of-battle ships and four frigates with screws; but they are only auxiliaries, and have not the speed of paddle steamers.

I have been obliged, my Lord, to go into these details, to enable me to show that with such an inefficient steam marine, the country is not safe. The French have a much more efficient steam Navy than we have. We have more horse-power, and, I believe, more tonnage; but, my Lord, France has twenty steam frigates capable of mounting thirty-two guns, and of carrying 2,000 troops with ease. These vessels were ostensibly built for packets, but were afterwards turned into men-of-war; and though different Admiralties have been told of this over and over again, they either did not, or pretended not, to believe it. I have seen them, been on board of them, and reported on them; and I presume it is now

* The Leopard is now nearly ready for launching. She is a good ship. Had my ideas been carried out she would have been a splendid steamer.

† They have since been pierced for guns on the main-deck, and carry ten or twelve.

beyond a doubt, as it is known that in twenty-six hours, some of them have carried 2000 men from Toulon to Civita Vecchia, and one with a vessel in tow, took a regiment of cavalry there*.

I will not ask your Lordship what the French are doing at Rome; it is enough for my argument that they are there; and that they went there without telling the Romans they were coming. I advise your Lordship to look at the chart—not at the distance from Toulon to Civita Vecchia, but at the distance from Cherbourg to Portland. Expeditions, my Lord, are not what they used to be before the invention of steam and railroads. It took months to collect transports and troops, and months afterwards to move them to their destination. The French are now besieging Rome —they, most probably, will carry it; and we, most probably, will remonstrate—if we dare.

Has your Lordship forgotton the affair of Syria, when war was on the point of being declared, and our ships lying for months at Spithead waiting for men, and the French so superior to us that we might have been beaten in detail? If your Lordship has forgotton it, I have not. Has your Lordship forgotton the affair at Tahati, when we were powerless, and even forced to patch it up, and I doubt if the indemnity is paid to this day? Has your Lordship forgotton that we sent a fleet to Copenhagen, and stole the Danish fleet in profound peace, without declaring war? Has your Lordship forgotten that we sent a squadron to intercept the Spanish galleons, without declaring war? Has your Lordship forgotten how this country was bamboozled by France about the Spanish marriages, and that by a regular Government, notwithstanding the *entente cordialle;* and has your Lordship forgotten the Duke of Wellington's letter, in which he exposed the defenceless state of the country? I have set forth these occurrences, and I look upon our present position with the greatest apprehension. Lord Lansdowne says we have not remonstrated as yet with France. I ask your Lordship if we are in a condition to remonstrate? When Rome is taken—which I fear it will be—if we offer any threat, if we say one offensive word, what is to hinder the French collecting the very steam vessels that transported the French army

* I saw five of these vessels at Cherbourg the other day, and I saw no reason to change my opinion, further than to observe, if they carried their full complement of guns, it would be necessary to take less coal, which they can afford to do. They are pierced for twenty-eight, instead of thirty-two guns, as I stated.

to the capital of the Catholic world, at Cherbourg, and transport an army to this country?

It may be argued that the French have their hands full already, that they are quarrelling amongst themselves. What, my Lord, would unite them so soon as a war cry? It appears the Government have got the better of the Red Republicans. The President in his speech, tells France, that they have an army of 450,000 men, a sailing navy nearly equal to our own, and a steam navy far superior.

The army seem stanch to their colours, and if we dare to remonstrate—if we dare to say an offensive word, were Louis Napoleon to hold up his fingers, and pronounce the name of England, I verily believe the whole army, Red Republicans and all, would throw up their caps, and rush to the sea coast, just as the gold diggers do to California; they would find a rich harvest here, and easier reaped than by digging; and what, my Lord, have we to prevent them? If in 1847 it was thought advisable to have a Channel fleet of six sail of the line, and as many steamers, when France was quiet and under a strong Government, is it not more necessary now when all France, and indeed all Europe, seem to have run mad? If, my Lord, there was a bridge between Dover and Calais, and France was quiet, would you withdraw your sentinels? far less ought you to do it when that King is hurled from his throne, and the country in revolution. There are bridges, my Lord—moveable bridges; one has already passed from Toulon to Rome 30,000 men—another may pass a still larger force from Cherbourg to Portland; and yet, my Lord, you have withdrawn your sentinels, and, at the bidding of Mr. Cobden and his arbitration party, have turned adrift 4,500 seamen. Your First Lord of the Admiralty says, the reductions are not so large as was supposed. He is mistaken; your reductions are larger, apparently it is 3,000 men; but, in reality, it is 4,500 men, because you had at least 1,500 men above the estimate.

It may be said I am exposing the nakedness of the land. The Duke of Wellington's letter has done that already; but his Grace's letter was not necessary. The French Government know just as well as we do the force of every ship of war in the service, the station of every regiment, the number of our guns, and I dare say, the number of the muskets in all our arsenals. I may

be called an alarmist. I confess it. I am alarmed at our defenceless state; and I hope to God I shall alarm the Government, the Parliament, and the people. Let Mr. Cobden and his party arbitrate if they will. Let them go to Paris now, and ask the French to withdraw from Rome—ask them to reduce their enormous army—and no man will be happier than I shall be to see all our establishments reduced. But, until he has got his arbitration into play, let us, for God's sake, take care of ourselves.

Your Lordship may say we have already a reserve steam force which has cost the country millions. That is true; but what a contemptible force it is—a force that is quite unequal to contend with France.

Your Lordship may ask what I propose. I will tell your Lordship. Put the whole strength of your dockyards on the steam vessels (such as they are) now on the stocks, and get them ready for service*.

The Queen has been commissioned—man her, and fit her out as fast as possible; complete the crews of the Superb and Ganges: man the Blenheim and Ajax screw steamers out of the Excellent; fit out and arm your steam vessels; and do this at once, before your sailors go to Denmark and Germany, let this squadron assemble at Spithead. You will then be in a position to arbitrate or remonstrate if you will. Watch well the progress of events in the Mediterranean, and if war takes place, order the fleet from the Mediterranean to protect our own shores. Parliament cannot object to this; Mr. Cobden could not object to it. It is a precaution; it will not be an expensive precaution. If you do not want to press for money at present, you may suspend works in progress in the dockyard that are not pressing. Search closely into all your departments; ransack the dockyards, and you will find the means of saving thousands and thousands of pounds: appoint a committee of experienced steam officers to decide how your future steam vessels shall be built; give up cutting and carving and changing ships' bows and sterns; give up converting good sailing ships into bad steamers at an enormous expense; and look more strictly at the expense of your dockyards, and you will have no occasion to go to Parliament for more money.

I remain, Your Lordship's obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

June 17, 1849.

* This has been done.

*** Since this letter appeared, we have fitted out and manned three screw line-of-battle ships, such as they are, and one screw frigate, and have got up a home squadron of frigates, with one ship of the line, and we have lengthened the Dauntless screw frigate at a considerable expense, and commissioned her: we have changed the position of the Termagant's masts, and have had her under the hands of Portsmouth Dockyard for more than a year, and I believe we have at last found out that the screw must be limited to an auxiliary power. Neither Termagant or Dauntless can stow their men below, nor can they carry sufficient coal. The Horatio frigate has also been fitted with a *screw*, and a precious tool she is. Penelope, of the same class, was lengthened, though not enough for a paddle steamer. The Horatio, which required more length for a screw, *was not lengthened at all.* There are three frigates of the same class getting ready, and one line-of-battle ship, and we have several screw liners building, and it is to be hoped they have been well considered. The Retribution has had her 800-horse engines removed, and replaced by 400-horse oscillating engines; has a clear main deck, and can mount twenty-six guns, but cannot use her bow and stern guns on the main deck; she was fitted at Woolwich, and so badly, is now in the Dockyard at Portsmouth. *That is the way the money is spent.* The Terrible has had two of her boilers removed, and it has leaked out, that the engines would not stand the working of four. Application has been made to remove the long stern guns, as they cannot be worked with efficiency. The Leopard is nearly ready for launching: she will carry main-deck guns, and will be better than Odin, Tiger, Magician, Furious, and Valorous, and might have been the best of all; the four last were intended to have been an improvement on the Sidon; and in consequence of a letter from the Admiralty requesting my opinion, I recommended them to be a foot broader, ten feet longer, and two feet deeper; but it appears their Lordships changed their minds, and except the Magician, they are less tonnage than Odin, and were all meant to carry only four guns on the main deck, and to have had the officers' cabin there, and were actually so fitted in the Magician. All that has been changed, and they are now to carry main-deck guns, and have the cabins below. The Magician and Tiger have not clear main decks, and the tiller is in the Captain's cabin. The Furious has a clear main deck, as far as the paddle beams will allow, and her tiller is in the after gun-room, where it ought to be. None of them have sufficient depth of hold, and they will be cramped in their stowage.

We have now ten paddle frigates carrying main-deck guns, and the sooner the misnamed frigates are reduced to corvettes, the better. So, on the whole, we present a much better front than we did last year, and I suppose we shall hear no more of the impropriety of paddle steamers carrying main-deck guns, or the impossibility of getting the boilers below the water.

As to our small steamers, we have a great deal too many, and the sooner they are worn out the better.

It is useless saying anything of the iron steam fleet; they seem to be condemned as useless, and they are only fit for troop ships in peace, or receiving ships and coal depôts in war; and had the money they cost been properly spent, we should have now had a most respectable steam fleet.

THE BOARD OF ADMIRALTY.

To Lord John Russell.

My Lord, I dare say you think it great presumption, in so humble an individual as myself, addressing Her Majesty's Prime Minister, but I can assure your Lordship I am actuated by no other feeling than the public good. I have tried all other means of correcting the evils, that are now evident to every body, in vain, and I fall back on your Lordship as the last resort.

If your Lordship doubts any of the statements I made in my last letter, it would be very easy to expose them; but, my Lord, they stand uncontradicted, for I do not call the letter of the Duke of Portland any contradiction at all; and the press, with the exception of one paper, supposed to be the organ of the Admiralty, acknowledges their correctness.

It is now my duty to explain to your Lordship the causes of the evils of which I complain.

The whole mischief proceeds from the constitution of the Board of Admiralty, and even if your Lordship, with all your talents, was to place yourself at its head, constituted as it now is, and choose the cleverest men in the Navy to assist you, I do not believe you would mend the matter. Bad as the naval administration was before the Navy and Victualling Boards were abolished, it is ten times worse now. The Admiralty have taken upon themselves more duties than they can perform—hence the delays, blunders, confusion, and waste; and I am quite certain, had the Navy Board, bad as it was, been in existence, they never would have permitted, without remonstrance, the wasteful extravagance that has been incurred by the various Admiralty Boards since their extinction.

What Sir George Cockburn, Sir George Clerk, and, I believe, Sir Byam Martin, foretold, has come to pass. There is no responsibility whatever; for the responsibility of six gentlemen, composing the Board of Admiralty, is not worth a straw. May I ask your Lordship, who is responsible for the millions of money thrown away in building an inefficient steam navy—who is respon-

sible for the iron steam fleet, that the Admiralty do not know what to do with? It was only the other day that, raising a tank, and the dunnage under it, in one of those precious vessels, they found a hole in her bottom, through which the water passed, and a *fish* with it, on which, if I am not mistaken, one of their Lordships breakfasted.

Who is responsible for, I believe, four pair of large engines, that they do not know what to do with, and pay annually for taking care of?

Who is responsible for all the bad ships that have been built, and broken up, in the last fifty years?

How comes it, that the best two-decked ships we have, are copies from the French?

Who is responsible for all the cutting and carving of ships' bows and sterns, for turning four line-of-battle ships, and as many frigates, into screws, before trying one, three of which, after three or four years' bungling, and an enormous expence, are now ready; the rest were suspended by the present Board, though "Beta," who writes in one of the morning papers, and who I shall reply to by-and-by, regrets they were not all brought forward. If I am not mistaken, he will turn out to be one who had a considerable hand in these ships, and in the construction of the iron fleet.

Who is responsible for allowing so many ships to be built after the plan of the late Surveyor, which is now abandoned? Either his plan is good or bad. If bad, why were so many ships built after it? If good, why is it discontinued? Why were the ships laid down by the late Surveyor, and not too far advanced, pulled to pieces, to be built after another plan?

Who is responsible for carrying on the construction of some of these ships (ordered to be stopped) till too late to alter them? Absolutely nobody; the greater part of the individuals composing the different Boards are dispersed, some dead, some out of political life, few left of so great a multitude. Had the First Lord of the Admiralty been a naval officer, the country would have fixed the responsibility on him—he could not escape; but it would be unjust to throw the blame on a civilian, who does not know whether a butcher's tray, or a washing-tub, is the best form for a man-of-war.

I shall be told the naval officers are there to instruct him. I

can only reply, that experience has proved that it does not answer. Why, then, should it be continued?

I am quite aware that it is useless to endeavour to persuade your Lordship, and, indeed, any other Prime Minister, that a naval officer ought to be at the head of the Navy, as a military officer is at the head of the Army. Ministerial men will never give up the prize of First Lord without a struggle; it is quite unimportant whether they are fit for it or not.

The present First Lord is a very good man, and I believe a good man of business; but he has been brought up in quite a different line; he has been in the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and all he can know about naval affairs, is his having represented Portsmouth for a good many years. What would be said of a Prime Minister, were he to take a sailor, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, and make him Chancellor of the Exchequer, without having the least experience of finance? But one is not a bit more ridiculous than the other.

Why should naval officers be held in such low estimation by Ministerial men, that it is never thought proper to place one at the head of his own profession? I am satisfied it is a great mistake; but so it is—and I must just take things as they are, and endeavour to improve them, which, after all, I do not consider very difficult. The first step to improvement would be to reduce the Admiralty to three—a First Lord and two others, who should, for the time being, be Vice and Rear-Admirals of Great Britain.

They should appoint a naval officer Surveyor of the Navy during pleasure (but not to be removed as a thing of course by a new Ministry); this officer should have the entire management of the dockyards, and under him should be a Deputy-Surveyor, whose principal duty should be the Storekeeper's department. The medical and victualling department should be under a naval officer also.

These officers should be frequently in the dockyards and victualling and hospital departments, and not pass through them with railroad speed as the Admiralty now do. The Accountant-General at the head of his own department should be the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Navy, and exercise a wholesome control over the expenditure. All these departments should be under the same roof; every man should be within hearing of the board-room bell—no running backwards and forwards to Somerset-

house, losing time, and paying messengers and numerous additional clerks*.

It may be said, with the exception of being under the same roof, that is the present arrangement; that the Admiralty is divided into departments, and a Lord has charge of each. But, my Lord, they are not responsible. They do not, and cannot, give their undivided time to the department. They all meddle with and control one another. They have no distinct power and no distinct responsibility. I would give the power to each man in his own department, and he should be responsible to the Admiralty and the country.

Let us examine how things are carried on now in the Surveyor's department.

He has six masters, each of whom he is obliged to consult individually. If it is about repairing or fitting out a ship, he goes to the first Sea-lord: if about building, Lord John Hay; if about the guns, to Captain Berkeley; if about the packets, to Mr. Cowper; if about the dockyards generally, to the First Lord and the Secretary; if about stores, to Captain Milne. More than half of his time is occupied in running about from the Admiralty at Somerset House to the Admiralty at Whitehall. If he wants to see the First Lord, he may be at a Cabinet Council; if any of the other Lords, or the Secretary (during the sitting of Parliament), they may be in committee; and all his day is lost.

Should the Admiralty require a plan or an estimate—which, by the bye, they do now for every trifle—they write to Somerset House, who again write to a dockyard; the dockyard sends the plan to Somerset House, who put something on the cover of the letter, and send it to the Admiralty; they put a scratch upon it, and send it back; it gets another scratch, and returns to the Admiralty. Somerset House is then ordered to write the letter; it comes back to the Admiralty to be signed, and is then finally dispatched. Should there be any mistake it is returned, and performs the same number of voyages over again. I believe this system runs through all the departments, and if I am not mistaken, the various scratchings on the letter are much oftener made

* It is to be hoped the two houses, recommended by the Committee on Salaries to be taken from the junior Lords, will be turned into offices for the Surveyor and Storekeeper-General and the first Lords, and all the other houses ought to be allotted to the other departments.

by the clerks than by their Lordships. Now, my Lord, consider all these delays—consider the number of clerks who must be employed to carry on this correspondence; and after all, who is responsible? Absolutely nobody!

I would abolish all that system. Let every man be held responsible for his own department, and let the Admiralty superintend the whole; they will have enough to do without going into details—which they cannot do, and which the clerks are obliged to do for them.

There is no want of talent in the country; a better man cannot be found for the Surveyor's department than Sir Baldwin Walker. Give him rope enough, and I will answer for it hundreds of thousands of pounds will be saved, and there will be no more bungling. When a ship is ordered to be built, he will send for the builder, and explain to him what is wanted; if that builder performs his task badly, put him out, and get a better. Do away with all your planners at Somerset House; let your Surveyor consult the practical men at the different ports; instead of running backwards and forwards to Whitehall, let him go to the dockyards and leisurely examine what is going on, and not run through them as the Admiralty now do; give more power to your superintendents of dockyards and a great deal less office work; when ships are commissioned, put a stop to all changes at the whim of every commander, and teach them to keep their own ships in repair, and do at home what they are obliged to do abroad—viz. take care of their own ships—and where are they in such good order? On the home station, if you fit out a ship to the eastward, the probability is, if she touch at Portsmouth she has a long list of defects. Make them good, and send her to Plymouth, there will be another list. Put a stop to all that. I know from experience it can be done. Let every Captain have an account of the annual expense of his ship. Show favour to those who sail their ships with the greatest economy, and avoid employing those who sail their ships expensively. Be assured a reform in that respect will speedily take place.

Whether your Lordship will approve of these suggestions or not I cannot tell; but unless things are mended, I feel quite certain the country will get tired of giving money to the Navy to be expended without doing good. Thousands of pounds might be

saved in your dockyards*. That is where you ought to economise—not in paying off your seamen, whom you have encouraged to come into the service, and whom you may want when least expected.

I remain, your Lordship's obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, July 29, 1849.

To Lord John Russell.

My Lord, In my last letter, I pointed out to your Lordship the impropriety of having a civilian who knows nothing about the Navy, placed, as a matter of course, at the head of the Admiralty.

I shall now examine how the Board is appointed when Her Majesty selects a Minister to form her Administration.

The country in general, being ignorant of the matter, naturally suppose that he takes the Navy List in his hand, and chooses the best and most experienced officers to carry on the business of the Navy, little supposing that he is not only limited to his own party, but is limited to those of his party having seats in Parliament; for it seldom happens that an officer is selected without reference to politics†.

Naval officers never look forward to seats at the Board as a reward for distinguished services. They know full well that they must get into Parliament before they have much chance of a seat at the Admiralty: it is, therefore, more than probable, that the officers who compose the Board are not always those most fit for the situation. I am not alluding to the present gentlemen; they are, I dare say, just as good as their predecessors, though having only one Admiral there, they certainly do not carry the weight they ought to do‡. I am quite aware, my Lord, as long as

* The steam factory at Portsmouth has now been greatly reduced, and no steam vessel is allowed to go into the engineer's hands, if she can be repaired by the engineer afloat; an excellent regulation.

† The last vacancy at the Admiralty has not been filled by a Member of Parliament.

‡ There are now two Admirals there, and I trust the second will have force enough to check the jobbery that goes on to so great an extent.

the Admiralty is a political machine, it must be so constituted. The Secretary of the Treasury must have a certain number of officials (as Mr. Duncombe said), " to make a House, keep a House, and cheer the Minister;" but, my Lord, they are not always the fittest men to make a fleet, guide a fleet, and rule the various branches of that complicated service.

How is it possible that men who go down to the House at four o'clock, sit there till after midnight, and frequently attend committees in the day-time, can find time to manage the Navy as it ought to be? It must be left to clerks, and experience has proved, beyond a doubt, that the system works badly.

The business of the Army is carried on in a very different manner. There is a Commander-in-chief, Adjutant and Quarter-master General, and Military Secretary: they have no House of Commons to attend to—their whole time is devoted to the military service—they have no jobbing to do for the Minister; hence the few complaints that are made against the management of the Army. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to get it out of the hands of a Commander-in-chief; and I well recollect, when I brought the formation of the Admiralty before the House of Commons, a noble Lord stated that thousands of pounds, and thousands of lives would be saved, if the Army was differently governed; but I trust the day is far distant, when the command of the Army is to be made a political machine.

May I ask you, my Lord, if the Navy had been ruled as the Army is, whether we should have had such an enormous list of officers, whom the country cannot employ, and who cost immense sums of money? No Commander-in-chief would have dared to so burden the list; and no Minister would have permitted it to be so burdened, unless, indeed, he shared largely in the distribution of the patronage.

In war it is difficult to keep the lists down; but in peace they ought to be so reduced as to make allowance for their necessary increase in war. I think in 1830 a resolution was passed by the Board, that promotions should be restricted to one in three; and I believe Sir James Graham conformed tolerably well to the rule, but it was soon forgotten. A reference to the Navy List will show, that on the 1st of January 1830, there were 851 Captains, 905 Commanders, 3581 Lieutenants; and on the 1st of October 1846, before the retirement took place, there were 730 Captains,

855 Commanders, 2538 Lieutenants; showing a reduction of only 121 Captains, 50 Commanders, 1043 Lieutenants; during which time the removals by death and promotion were 471 Captains, 546 Commanders, 1893 Lieutenants. Had the promotion of one in three been adhered to, instead of having a list of 730 Captains, 855 Commanders, 2538 Lieutenants, we should have had 537 Captains, 541 Commanders, 2319 Lieutenants. No retired list would have been necessary, and the country would have saved not only £30,000 a year, but the difference of pay between what the list was in 1846, and what it would have been, had faith been kept with the public. I know it will be said, that in the one in three it was not intended to include service and general promotions. In that case it would have been much better to have made no resolution at all, for it only taught First Lords to consider the one in three their private patronage; and, indeed, I have heard one of the Lords of the Admiralty announce as much in the House of Commons. However, let bygones be bygones; there is no help for it now; but for the future, if the country do not put on a check-string, they have no right to complain.

I am not disposed to be too parsimonious of promotion, for I know, if justly dealt out, it is the mainspring of action. I would, therefore, willingly allow one promotion for two removals on the lists of captains, commanders, and lieutenants, but that should cover every thing; and in a few years, when we had some admirals of fifty years of age, I would extend the same restriction to them. This would soon put the lists on a wholesome footing; and officers, instead of staying on shore, as they now do, some twenty years after promotion, would be constantly employed, as the French officers are; the knowledge of their profession would be kept up, and a great saving to the public effected. And First Lords, whoever they are, must be taught that the promotions in the navy are intended for the public good, and not to be exclusively bestowed on their private and political friends.

All general promotions must be put a stop to, for they are the overwhelming evil. In 1841, when the Tories had been so long out of office, they made up for lost time with a vengeance, and under pretence of services on the coast of Syria and China, no less than 79 captains, 147 commanders, 194 lieutenants, were added to the lists. In addition to this, after the House of Commons had in the most liberal manner voted £30,000 for a retired

list, which removed 180 captains, a general promotion took place, which added to the lists 70 captains, 132 commanders, 130 lieutenants. This was done by the Whigs, which showed they were nearly as hungry after being out of office five years, as the Tories were after their repose of sixteen; so that, what between Tory Admiralties and Whig Admiralties, John Bull, poor honest beast, is sure to be burdened, which he has hitherto born with patience; but if he stands it any longer, he has his own self to blame, and has no right to grumble. It is true the admirals' list is limited to 150, and the Captain's to 500; but that won't do. An attempt was made last year to reduce the Admirals to 100, which failed, and I am glad it did, because had it succeeded, the intention of the retired list (which was to reduce the age of Admirals) would have failed, and the £30,000 been thrown away. But I strongly recommend your Lordship not to stop at 500 Captains, let them gradually be reduced much lower; and be assured, my Lord, if the Government do not show a positive determination to make reasonable reductions of what is useless, the country will do it for them. They do not wish the efficiency of the navy destroyed; on the contrary, they wish to see it kept up: they don't want to see their ships dismantled, and their seamen turned adrift, but they wish to see economy in promotion, and in all the branches of the service.

On the commanders' list there are 857, and we employ about 100. A great many of that rank are unfit for service: they should be put on a *separate list*, and the country would know the number of efficient commanders that remained. No First Lord will do this till he is forced to it. He has at present the promotion of one in three on the whole list; whereas, if the inefficient were obliged to retire, he would only have the promotion on the active list. The same should be done with the lieutenants.

Now that I am on patronage, it is as well to observe that so far are the Admiralty from reducing their patronage, they are every day grasping at more.

Formerly Captains alone had the power of bringing young gentlemen into the service, a reasonable share of which went to the Admiralty. They have now seized upon the whole, allowing two to an Admiral, and one to a Captain on his commissioning a ship; and not satisfied with that, the Captain is generally solicited by some one of the Board to give up his vacancy; the Commanders

have been lately deprived of theirs, and unless it is checked the Captains will share their fate.

The Captain was formerly allowed to choose his clerk, which is provided for on the printed instructions, and for whom he is responsible; but the senior Naval Lord, eager for patronage, has upset the instructions, and seized upon that appointment. The masters' assistants have long been in his grasp, these little places being very convenient for the members of naval boroughs.*

In another letter, my Lord, I shall have a ransack at dockyard establishments, and see if it is not possible to get a little more work done for the same expense, and find out some means of reducing the expense of materials.

I have the honour to remain, your Lordship's obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, September 9th, 1849.

*** *In a subsequent letter, I have given a more particular account of how the Admiralty minute has been attended to, and what promotions were made by the different First Lords of the Admiralty.*

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND AND REAR-ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, I have read Sir C. Napier's letter to Lord John Russell. I entirely agree with him that this country ought at all times to be so well furnished with steam-boats of war, and to have so great a superiority in that description of naval force, as would make any attempt at invasion hopeless. I conceive that any economy which would leave that superiority doubtful would be as silly as in the event it might be ruinous. It is a question for the Government whether we have a force sufficient for the purpose or not. The Admiral seems to consider that because our steam-boats of war do not generally carry broadside guns, a very small proportion of those we have is calculated for the purpose of repelling an invasion. The argument would be good, if a steam-boat could be safely carried into close action.

* I should like to see a return of all situations given to the Greenwich constituency.

I learn from authority much better than that of the Admiral, that steam-boats cannot be hazarded where their steam-chests and funnels would be exposed to the shot of heavy guns, from which in close action protection is impossible. If, therefore, his argument for the insufficiency of our force stands on the foundation of the absence of broadside guns, and *on that alone*, it is worth nothing*.

I observe that he adopts the language of the Report of the Committee about the necessity of constant communication between the builder of the ship and constructor of the engine. It seems extraordinary, considering the composition of the Committee, that they should have given such an opinion. It is quite obvious that one of two things must always be done: either the ship must be built first, and the engine adapted to its powers—or the engine must be constructed first, and the ship built of sufficient power to carry it.

When the Retribution, to which the Admiral alludes, was ordered to be built, she was intended to carry engines of 500-horse power. The constructors of the engines persuaded the Admiralty that they could furnish engines of 800-horse power on a different plan, which should not be heavier or take more room than those first intended. When they came to be finished, and were put on board, the engineers were found to be mistaken, and the engines to weigh above 100 tons more, and to take up more room than was anticipated. The consequence was that the ship was spoiled.

The Terrible, a larger ship, received also engines of 800-horse power. But in the mean time, great improvements had been made in the engine, which had more power and less weight than that put into the Retribution. She is probably the best steam-boat of war in our service. I have no reason to believe that the Sidon is perfection. She certainly acquired among seamen a very opprobrious nickname.

I join with you most cordially in professing the highest respect for, and admiration of Sir C. Napier, the General. What I know of the Admiral does not incline me to make the same profession as to him.

I have, &c.

SCOTT PORTLAND.

Welbeck, June 22, 1849.

* His Grace is perhaps not aware that the Retribution could not fire a bow or a stern gun in the line of the keel on the main deck, and she could not fire a stern gun at all.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, I do not know who Mr. Scott Portland is, but he knows so little about his subject that his letter is hardly worth answering.

If he had asked Capt. Chads, who I presume is better authority than his instructor, he would have told him that it is not easy to knock away a funnel, and experiments to that effect have been tried on board the Excellent; and that if he had asked Capt. Ellis, he would have told him, that in going into action the steam-chest is cut off from the boilers, and the engine is supplied with low steam from the latter. He would have told him, also, that the boilers (following the example of the Sidon) are as much below the water line as the crown of the magazine is in frigates, and much more than in corvettes; but suppose they were as much exposed as Mr. Scott Portland thinks, I should like to know from him, whether twenty steam-frigates, mounting thirty-two guns each, would not destroy the funnels and boilers of twenty steamers, mounting six or eight guns, much sooner than they would if equally matched.

He says, one of the two things must be done—either the ship must be built first or the engine. He is again wrong: the whole must be done in concert, or they will not agree. The engine becomes an integral part of the ship, as much as any other part of her; and so the Committee of the House of Commons thought, though Mr. Scott Portland thinks it extraordinary.

Whether the engineer who made the Retribution engines, deceived the Admiralty or not, I will leave to himself to explain; but I believe I am correct in saying that the engines of the Retribution and Terrible are on the same plan, and, I believe, made by the same man, and nearly at the same time. The boilers are different, which renders four funnels necessary in the Terrible, which is a very great defect.

I shall not enter into a controversy about the qualities of the Terrible and Sidon; all the reports are at the Admiralty, and they know well enough the good and bad qualities of both.

I am much pleased at the high respect Mr. Scott Portland has for my cousin, Sir Charles Napier, the General, and much dis-

tressed at his want of respect for the Admiral; but I take leave to observe, that has nothing to do either with the construction of steam-vessels or the defence of the country; and I think, had he left out the latter part of his letter, it would have been more creditable to himself, and given him more weight with the public.

I have the honour to be, SIR, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, June 26, 1849.

To the Editor of the Naval and Military Gazette.

SIR, When the Duke of Wellington wrote his celebrated epistle on the prospects of invasion, invasion was practicable. Our national defences then available *at short notice*, consisted of little more than the guard-ships at the home ports, three time-honoured and weakly-armed ships.

A state of insecurity was incompatible with his Grace's silence; he accordingly stated his opinion, and it was acted upon; batteries were raised and steamers armed. Now Sir C. Napier comes forward and sounds the same alarm. Wherefore? is asked with surprise. His motives are, doubtless, as pure and patriotic as those which animated his illustrious exemplar; but the circumstances are changed. England is now in a better defensive attitude than she has ever been in at any pacific period of her history. She is characteristically defended by her navy; let the following facts speak.

At the Channel ports, in addition to two permanently-commissioned heavy armed steam line of battle ships, there are from fifteen to twenty advance paddle-steamers ready for sea; there are about 2,000 seamen in the guard-ships, in the ordinary, and as seamen riggers, 500 men in the Excellent, and probably 2,500 marines in barracks, making a total of 5,000 embarkable men, with sea legs, and used to gunnery more or less.

At the rate of 150 to 200 men to a ship, exclusive of commissioned and warrant officers, the advanced steam Squadron would require from 3,000 to 3,500 men, leaving a strong surplus to bring other vessels forward. There would be also the Boat Brigades and the Coast Guard in the vicinity, if their aid should be required. This Squadron could be at sea within thirty hours of

receiving the order. It would not, then, appear quite so easy to transport 30,000 men from Cherbourg to London, as from Toulon to Rome. I do believe that the naval resources of France collected in any one point in the channel, being thus opposed, would fail in landing two brigades on the English coast, within twenty miles of each other. The axiomatic saying that steam has facilitated the means of invasion—has bridged the channel, is a fallacy which has induced much erroneous calculation about attack and defence, and the sooner it meets with discredit the better for the tranquillity of parties on both sides of the channel. It is a fallacy, because steam has increased in a greater ratio the means of defence. I can fancy no completer picture of comparative helplessness than a war-steamer, embarrassed with troops, towing a transport laden with Cavalry or Artillery. She would prove little more than a floating slaughter-house. A sense of chivalry would raise a blush at having to fire into her from a free-moving, unencumbered steamer, one of our Advanced Squadron.

I do not know who originated the grand idea of the Advanced Steam Squadron, but whoever it was, has deserved well of his country. The laurel crown voted by the Athenians to Pericles, for his augmentation of the navy, was not better won.

The Advanced Steam Squadron, combines the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of cost. Scarcely exceeding the expence of two line-of-battle ships, it realizes the command of the Channel at all times.

Sir C. Napier's low estimate of English war-steamers, by comparison with French war-steamers, will also, I am glad to say, bear investigation. French war-steamers, of the first class, are deficient in two cardinal points—viz. speed and armament of the extremities. Our first-class steamers are far superior to them in those essentials. The value of broadside guns, beyond a couple in each side to repel boats, in a paddle-steamer, is still open to discussion*. If she should use them against a sailing frigate, she would be crushed by superior fire; if against a steamer, fighting from one of her extremities, she would present a mark four or five times as wide, and the exposed parts of her machinery would be in the direction of shot, while her antagonist might, in

* It does not appear so, for all the large steamers that have been since launched carry broadside guns.

a great measure, protect his machinery by stowing sails, bags, and hammocks 'tween decks from the engine-room forwards. The disadvantage, the certain risk of a broadside action to a paddle-steamer, are manifest; I cannot, therefore, consider French paddle-steamers more efficient than ours in consequence of their broadside guns. I am rather disposed to think, that by relieving them of part of that weight, concurrently, giving them heavier pivot-guns, their real force would be increased. The distinction appears plainly marked between the objects of screw and paddle-steamers, and I hope we shall not be seduced by French example to lose sight of it: moderate steam-speed and broadside-guns for the former—high steam-speed and pivot-guns for the latter. I am, SIR, your obedient servant,

A. SLADE, Captain R. N.

London, 27th June.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, "When the Duke of Wellington wrote his cele-"brated epistle on the prospect of invasion," writes Captain Slade, in the Naval and Military Gazette, "invasion was prac-"ticable. Our naval defence then available at short notice, con-"sisted of little more than the guard ships at the home ports—"those time-honoured and weakly-armed ships—a state of insecu-"rity incompatible with his Grace's silence; he accordingly "stated his opinion, and it was acted upon. Batteries were "built and steamers armed. Now Sir Charles comes forward "and sounds the alarm. Wherefore? is asked with surprise." May I ask, Sir, what has become of Captain Slade's memory? When the Duke wrote his celebrated letter, I was lying in the Tagus, with the home squadron, consisting of five or six sail of the line—four, I think, three deckers—as many steamers, besides frigates and small craft; and, if my memory serves me, Captain Slade commanded one of them. France and all Europe were in a state of profound peace, and not the least appearance of a disturbance. "Circumstances," he says, "are changed. England "is now in a better defensive attitude than she has ever been at "any pacific period of her history."

Circumstances are changed indeed. The home squadron is

disarmed, and 7500 men have been reduced (for at that time we had 4500 men above the estimate); and is it possible that Captain Slade can be ignorant of this? If he is, I am not, and that is the reason I have sounded the alarm.

What substitute have we for this force? We have a half-manned eighty-four gun ship at Cork, and another at Spithead; two steam two-decked screws (one commissioned after my letter appeared), and fifteen or twenty advanced paddle steamers.

"Who," exclaims Captain Slade, "originated this grand idea "of the advanced steam squadron? Whoever it was has de- "served well of his country. The laurel crown, voted by the "Athenians to Pericles, was not better won." A grand idea, indeed! You have paid off your steamers, and laid them up in your basins to decay. This is your advanced squadron. If Pericles got a laurel crown for increasing the Athenian navy, I shall not say what the Government deserves for reducing ours at the present time.

Captain Slade states, there are about 2,000 seamen in the guard-ships the ordinary and seamen riggers. If he means by the guard-ships, the Superb and Ganges—one at Spithead and the other at Cork, it would take all the men that could be spared (and were fit) to man them; but I will admit, that they could be completed at once from the shore.

You have then 500 men in the Excellent, and 500 seamen riggers in all your ports to fit out the steamers, for the ordinary men must stay where they are, to take care of the ordinary, and generally they are not fit for active service; and with them and 2,500 marines, he is to send to sea fifteen or twenty steamers in thirty hours, leaving a large surplus, besides the boat-brigade and coast service. Why, Sir, you could not coal in that time.

I have seen smart things done in my course of service, but I never saw anything to equal that, and Captain Slade had better recommend the Admiralty to try it, for, until then, he would not find many of his brother-officers to agree with him; but, Sir, I will suppose he can perform such wonders—how would he prevent invasion? He must, at least, allow that the French are just as expert as ourselves. The French, Sir, are a great deal more expert than we give them credit for; they have been for many years in the habit of embarking troops, artillery, and horses at

Toulon to carry to Algiers, and their expedition to Civita Vecchia shows what they can do. They have landed an army there, we are told, 30,000 strong, without the smallest provocation. I think they have thirty steamers in the Mediterranean, besides what they have at other ports. What is to hinder them from ordering their steamers to rendezvous at Cherbourg? They would be all there before we had the least knowledge of it. We know the facility with which, by the assistance of railroads, troops are collected, and we know that at Cherbourg many more than thirty steamers can lie alongside the quay. Now Captain Slade shall have his steamers ready, for I will even give him that; nay more, he shall be off Cherbourg, and command them himself. I should like to know how he is to prevent them coming over.

He says the French war-steamers are deficient in two cardinal points :—speed, and armament of the extremities. I do not think so ; they do not go less than nine knots, and those I have seen can fire guns aft and forward.

He says the value of broadside guns, beyond a couple on each side, against boats is open to discussion. How comes it, then, that all our largest steamers have broadside ports ? Is he going to tell us, that had these ports been high enough, guns would not have been put aboard of them ? Why, Sir, they are now going to remove the Retribution's 800 horse engines, and replace them with 400 horse engines, expressly to allow her to carry guns. The Terrible carries guns, so does the Odin, and so will the Leopard, (to say nothing of the Sidon).

Captain Slade says, " If a steam-vessel were to use broadside guns against a frigate, she would be crushed by superior force." Why, Sir, everybody knows that; but what a fool the Captain of a steamer would be, to come under the broadside of a superior frigate.

I do not know whether Captain Slade has seen the French large steamers, but he may rely upon it they could, with the greatest ease, carry 2000 men, and the greater part of them below, without the smallest inconvenience. It would not even be necessary to tow a vessel, but we know they have done so, and Captain Slade, with his fifteen or twenty steamers, might follow them if he pleased—they steaming in line abreast; he might harass them, it is quite true, but he would not prevent

their landing; and if he approached them he would be destroyed.

Captain Slade's letter may very probably please the Admiralty; but he may rely upon it, it will not satisfy the country.

Herewith you will receive a list of the French large steamers, and ours:—

BRITISH STEAM CORVETTES.

	Guns.	Horse Power.		Guns.	Horse Power.
Bulldog	6	500	Phœnix	6	260
Conflict	8	400	Rosamond	6	287
Cormorant	6	300	Salamander	6	220
Devastation	6	400	Scourge	2	420
Driver	6	280	Skilful	6	280
Gorgon	6	320	Sphynx	6	500
Growler	6	280	Stromboli	6	280
Hecate	6	240	Styx	6	280
Hecla	6	240	Trident	6	350
Hermes	6	220	Urgent	—	240
Hydra	6	220	Vesuvius	6	280
Inflexible	6	378	Virago	6	300
Medea	6	350	Vixen	6	280

FRENCH STEAM CORVETTES.

	Horse Power.		Horse Power.
Caffarelli	460	Chaptal	220
Infernal	400	Elan	220
Prony	320	Espadon	220
Colbert	320	Gassendi	220
Eumenide	300	Laborieux	200
Gorgone	300	Lavoisier	220
Archimède	220	Phoque	220
Caméléon	220	Pluton	220
Caiman	220	Titan	220
Caton	260	Veloce	220
Patriote	300		

BRITISH STEAM FRIGATES.

	Guns.	Horse Power.		Guns.	Horse Power.
Terrible	21	800	Gladiator	6	430
Sidon (to carry)	22	560	Sampson	6	467
Odin	12	560	Dragon	6	560
Retribution	6	800	Centaur	6	560
Penelope	(doubtful)	650	Cyclops	6	320
Firebrand	6	410	Vulture	6	470

FRENCH STEAM FRIGATES.

	Horse Power.		Horse Power.
Mogador	650	Magellan	450
Descartes	540	Orénoque	450
Vauban	540	Panama	450
Albatros	450	Sané	450
Asmodée	450	Canada	450
Cacique	450	Christophe Colomb	450
El Dorado	450	Darien	450
Gomer	450	Ulua	450
Labrador	450		

I have seen five of these frigates; they are pierced for thirty-two guns*, and capable of carrying them. I believe they are all alike.

In addition to these, the French have fifty-two steam-tenders, from 20 to 160 horse power; and we have also a number of small craft, of various sizes, I believe superior to the French. I have collated this from our own Navy List, and the French, I take from the Steam Navigation Gazette, and I have every reason to believe they are correct. I have not included those building in either France or England, nor the number of guns the French corvettes carry. I do not know, but I presume there is not much difference in the force of both countries.

I have the honour to remain, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER, Rear-Admiral.

July 10, 1849.

P. S. I have not included our iron vessels, because I believe they are considered useless by the Admiralty.

* Note.—*Captain Slade showed more* discretion *than I did; for shortly after, he was sent on a mission to the Mediterranean, and is now a Turkish Admiral. Abuse of me is a very good road to promotion and employment.*

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, I do not doubt that the French Government have at their command twenty powerful steamers, in which they might embark 40,000 men for the invasion of this country.

* This is a mistake, they are pierced for twenty-eight guns.

I hope and trust, however (I do not pretend to know), that we have such a force of armed steam-boats carrying heavy guns, as would make the landing of such a force impossible.

It is evident that steam-boats of war with fewer but heavy guns would by a distant cannonade harass such a fleet, so loaded with men, in a manner so effectual, as to disappoint and make vain any such attempt.

I do not doubt that single handed, a steam-boat with broadside guns would beat one without them. But that is not the question.

My opinion about steam-boats with broadside guns is not my own; I adopted it on the best authority.

In a letter to the late Lord Auckland, Sir W. Symonds wrote as follows:—

"I consider steamers of every description in the greatest peril "when it is necessary to use broadside guns in close action; not "alone from their liability to be disabled from shot striking their "steam chest, steam pipe, machinery, boilers, and funnel, but "from great probability of explosion, owing to sparks and flakes "of fire falling from the funnel, &c."

I have reason to believe that the Prince de Joinville was of the same opinion.

However Admiral Sir C. Napier may depreciate Sir W. Symonds as a ship-builder, or whatever injustice he may have done to his ships in his reports to the Admiralty of their trials when tried under his command, I presume he will not venture to dispute his authority as a seaman on naval subjects.

With respect to the passage in the report of the committee, I adhere to my opinion (with all respect for those who drew it up) that in the main, and with trifling exceptions, it is really contrary to common sense. I pledge my credit for the truth of what I stated about the engines of the Retribution and Terrible.

It is obvious in the case of the former, that no communication between the ship-builder and engineer could have prevented what happened.

I have the honour to be, SIR,
Your most obedient servant,
SCOTT PORTLAND.

Welbeck, July 1.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, So it appears that Mr. Scott Portland turns out to be no less a personage than his Grace of Portland.

I never could have thought a Duke would have condescended to make a gratuitous attack on a half-pay Rear-Admiral whom he never saw: he did, and got his answer. Now, for his second letter. His Grace does not doubt that the French have twenty powerful steamers capable of embarking 40,000 men. That, Sir, is a point gained; and he hopes we have a force of armed steamers capable of preventing a landing. I have shown very clearly we have nothing of the sort. It has been said there is no royal way of learning mathematics; and I am sure there is no ducal way of learning either seamanship or the art of naval war.

If steamers are properly built and fitted, the greater part of the machinery and all the boilers are secure from shot.

Sparks and flakes of fire are as dangerous when firing bow and stern guns as firing broadside guns; and a 68-pounder going off once, will throw more sparks and fire than would come from a funnel in an hour.

As for the report of the Committee of the House of Commons being contrary to common sense, I shall leave his Grace to settle that question with the Chairman.

The engines of the Terrible and Retribution are exactly the same, and made by the same engineer. The boilers of the Retribution are eighty tons heavier than the Terrible's; that would bring the Retribution about five inches more down in the water. If that was the only fault, it is easily remedied by giving her the same boilers as the Terrible; but the Admiralty seem to be of a different opinion, because they are going to give her a 400-horse engine, which will make her a good troop ship. His Grace's accusing me of doing injustice to Sir William Symonds' ships, in my report to the Admiralty, is too contemptible to reply to.

I remain, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER, Rear-Admiral.

Merchistoun, July 6, 1849.

THE STEAM NAVY.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, I think it will be allowed that, besides in my character as one of the public, I have a particular right, under the circumstances which occasioned the trials of the Helena, Frolic, and Pilot, to complain of Sir C. Napier's reports, when those trials were made under his command.

They originated in this way:—

Soon after the late Lord Auckland became First Lord of the Admiralty, I heard that the Albion was intended to be altered, and made narrower.

On hearing this, I took the liberty of writing to Lord Auckland, to deprecate that measure, and to state to him that the late trials of the Flying Fish, with the other experimental brigs, had proved, beyond all doubt, that that ship had too little beam, instead of too much; and that if he would order a second ship to be built in all other respects the same as the Flying Fish, but with a foot more beam, I would pay the expence of her building, if, on trial, she did not answer, provided I had the nomination of the officer who was to command her during the trial.

After much correspondence, and many objections, it was found that the Pilot, formerly built by Sir W. Symonds, exactly answered the description of such a brig as I proposed to have built.

She was put in commission, and I recommended Captain Lyons to command her. I wish that any praise I could bestow upon him, would do justice to his merits.

She, the Helena, built also by Sir W. Symonds, and the Frolic, built by Captain Hendry, having seven inches more beam than the Pilot, but which, having a round bottom, was leewardly, were attached to Sir C. Napier's squadron for the purpose of trial.

The Frolic alone would have proved my case.

In a report sent to the Admiralty, Sir C. Napier reported, that these brigs had been tried together, and *that the Pilot was last.*

This was literally true; but the report did not state how it was brought about.

The three brigs were sailing abreast, the Pilot being weathermost.

The Admiral ordered them by signal to bear up eight points; the effect of which was, of course, to give the others a great advantage over the Pilot.

Not a word of this manœuvre appeared in the report to the Admiralty, who were left under the false impression that the Pilot was in reality the inferior ship.

It is every man's duty, on all occasions, to tell the whole, real, and exact truth; but it is more particularly the duty of an Admiral not to mislead his superiors on a fact so important, as one which is intended to determine the best mode of building ships of war.

As one of the public I have also to complain that there did not appear in his reports a single word about the mismanagement of the Helena, which was notorious to the seamen of the fleet, which might well account for her poor performances.

Considering how constantly in Parliament Sir Charles Napier declaimed against Sir William Symonds and his ships, I can easily believe that he was neither disappointed at them, nor willing to account for them.

I am, SIR, Your most obedient servant,

SCOTT PORTLAND.

Welbeck, July 12, 1849.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, The murder is now out. His Grace of Portland says I did not do justice to the Pilot. I was astonished at this, and turned over my reports. I find that on the first trial the Pilot was first, Helena second, Frolic third.

On the second trial—Pilot first, beyond a doubt. All stiff except Helena, which appeared crank.

Third Trial—Frolic had the advantage.

Fourth Trial—Helena first, Frolic second, Pilot last.

Fifth Trial—Pilot first, Frolic second, Helena third.

Sixth Trial—Pilot went first to windward, then Helena, last Frolic.

Seventh Trial—Pilot first, Frolic second.

Eighth Trial—Frolic first, Pilot second, Helena last.

What the latter would have been in other hands I cannot say, but she was certainly not so well handled as the others. That is the answer to his Grace's second accusation. More than that, his Grace must know that another officer was appointed to the Helena.

Ninth Trial—Going free. Frolic first, Helena second, Pilot third.

The above is the account of the trials; and I must tell his Grace, once for all, that they were carried on with the greatest fairness, and whoever told him the contrary deceived him.

Now for their capabilities as men of war. Pilot carries four guns less than Helena or Frolic, though only thirty tons less measurement than Frolic and sixty-five less than Helena. The Pilot and Helena only stow three months' provisions, and the Helena, the largest of the three, carries between decks twelve bags of bread and four casks of salt provisions. The Frolic can stow five months' provisions under hatches, though she was weighted during the trials as the others were. That being the case, I must pronounce the Frolic the best man of war of the three.

His Grace may ponder on that, and if he doubts it I refer him to the Admiralty, for I will enter into no further controversy with him on the sailing qualities of ships or anything else.

I remain, SIR, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

July 15, 1849.

This finishes His Grace of Portland's unprovoked attack on me.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, I am glad Lord Talbot has called the attention of the House of Peers to the state of the steam navy of this country. I do not know the nature of the returns his Lordship has called for, but I do hope that he will take care they are properly given.

His Lordship is mistaken when he said that I had overlooked

the screw ships. If he will reperuse my letter to Lord John, he will see that I stated, "In addition to these we have "three line of battle ships and four frigates with screws; but they "are only auxiliaries, and have not the speed of paddle steamers."

As to the remarks his Lordship has made on the Sidon, I do think it would have been just and fair had he written to Captain Henderson, who commanded her upwards of two years, and asked his opinion; or had he read his examination before the Committee of the House of Commons, and did not credit it, he might have made inquiries, and he would have found his statements were correct.

Lord Talbot is a Captain in the navy, and before he made a statement in the House of Peers to the injury of a brother officer, he ought to have been sure of his facts.

If the Sidon is crank, as his Lordship states, how comes it that she is about having her armament increased from fourteen 32-pounders on her main deck, to sixteen 68-pounders; and from four 56-pounders on the upper deck, to eight 68-pounders*? His Lordship is, I presume, a sailor, and must know that it is not usual to add guns to the upper deck of a crank ship. I may also ask why did his Lordship single out the Sidon for abuse? Could he find no other steamer but her deserving censure?

As I cannot think his Lordship would willingly do an act of injustice to a brother officer, I do not think I am asking too much to request him to read Captain Henderson's evidence, and, if not satisfied, to inform himself of her good and bad qualities.

As to the remark of the Earl of Minto, that he regrets that I should carry on a correspondence of such a description, and a controversy of such a nature, I beg to acquaint his Lordship that the correspondence was not of my seeking, and his observations would be better applied to his Grace of Portland than to me.

With his Lordship's further remark, that it can be attended with no public advantage, but, on the contrary, with a great deal of detriment to the public service, I cannot agree. It is public

* The Sidon has now fourteen 68-pounders on her main deck, six 68-pounders on her upper deck, and two heavy pivot-guns. Their Lordships have thought proper to lay her up, where, I suppose, she will remain until there is a change in the Admiralty. The Vindictive, fitted by Blake, was treated in the same manner, because he was the first that thought of arming the bow.

exposure alone that will prevent a repetition of such blunders, a great part of which were committed in his Lordship's administration.

I must also take the liberty of telling the honourable member for Sheffield, that had the evolutions which he says I practised in the House of Commons been attended to by him and the economists, millions of money would have been saved to the country, and we should have been in a more wholesome state than we now are.

I remain, your obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, July 22, 1849.

To Earl Talbot.

My Lord, In moving for returns connected with the steam navy, in your place in Parliament, you stated that you were not anxious to be led or dragged into a newspaper controversy. Why then, my Lord, did you drag me before the House of Lords, where I could not reply to you? Had I been in the other house, you may rely upon it you should have had your answer, and one that would not have been agreeable. Why could you not, my Lord, have moved for your returns without bringing me forward? You say I am not very scrupulous in attacking others, for which reason you had mentioned the Sidon. I attacked the system, my Lord; I attacked no one personally; and had you read Captain Henderson's evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, you would have seen I did not live in a glass house.

There might have been some excuse for your Lordship, when you first brought the Sidon forward, because you might not have seen Captain Henderson's evidence; but even then you ought to have informed yourself before you made your observations; but in your second speech you had no excuse whatever, for I complained of your not having read the evidence, or written to Captain Henderson on the subject.

In answer to questions, Captain Henderson said—"The Sidon "is the best steam-vessel I ever saw; she was remarkably easy in "a seaway; in a strong gale I never saw her refuse to go a-head,

" averaging at least between four and five knots an hour; and " her steaming was remarkable. I have had 500 men, an entire " regiment, drawn up on her deck at one time, and then there " was space for more. Her armament was heavy. Four " 56-pounders with carriages five tons weight, and fourteen " 32-pounders, about three tons with the carriage, two brass " howitzer 24-pounders, and two 12-pounder howitzers. This " armament she bore so well, that I have recommended her to " have a still heavier armament; her tonnage was 1330 tons; " she could take 700 tons of coal, which would last twenty days " at full speed; her engines were 560 horse power; she was " rigged like a bark, with topgallantmasts fidded abaft all, and " she carried more sail than any steamer I ever saw. Her rig- " ging was equal to the class of a 32-gun frigate. We beat out " of the Tagus with a squadron, on one occasion, beating them " all. We were cruising with those ships, and kept company " with them, even when blowing as hard as under treble reefed " topsails. She has gone 12½ knots an hour, with 300 tons of " coal on board for several hours. Under canvass the Terrible " beat us, or would have beat us, I think; we never had an " opportunity of properly ascertaining this. Captain Chads says, " we have but few steamers that are equal to go alongside a " French steamer, for want of broadside armaments. There is a " class which are Post-ships, but not frigates; but they have no " guns on the main deck: the Sidon has guns on her main deck; " she is weakly armed at present, but is capable of carrying a " heavy armament, equal to go alongside French ships."

Read, mark, and inwardly digest the above, my Lord, and then ask yourself if you have acted with the candour you ought to have done.

You also observed, my Lord, that it was my duty to go to the Premier, and state my opinion privately, and not publish our danger to the world.

How, my Lord, do you know I did not do so? I should have thought in the case of Mr. Warner's long range, your Lordship had had experience that it was no easy matter to get Prime Ministers to listen to private individuals.

Does your Lordship think that the Duke of Wellington never stated his opinion to a Prime Minister? yet, in reading his letter to Sir John Burgoyne, it is pretty evident his Grace was

not attended to; how then, could you suppose that much attention would be paid to me.

I shall take leave of your Lordship by observing, that I trust you will take care that the returns for which you have moved, are properly made out, and I also recommend your Lordship to visit our seaports and make yourself acquainted with our steam force: and as you will be expected in your place in Parliament to make a statement when your returns are laid on the table, I recommend your Lordship to take a trip to some of the French ports, and make personal observation on the French steam navy, unless you can persuade the Admiralty to give you a description of them, which I expect they are well able to do, if they are so inclined.

I remain, Your Lordship's obedient servant
CHARLES NAPIER.

*** I do not know whether the Returns Lord Talbot moved for, have been laid on the table of the House of Lords; nor have I heard whether his Lordship followed my advice, to go over and look at the French ports; but if he has not, and is anxious to inform himself, he will now have a good opportunity, as there is a large French squadron at Cherbourg; and he may prolong his journey and go to Kiel, where he will find a Russian squadron; while Great Britain has a screw line-of-battle ship and a frigate at Spithead. It is to be hoped we have no quarrel at present with either France or Russia.

To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.

SIR, As the publication in the columns of the newspapers, of a series of criticisms of the state of the navy, from the pen of a naval officer of rank and distinction, is of somewhat unusual occurrence, and as the public in general must be ignorant of naval affairs, it is not improbable that many of your readers may have been led to infer, that the dictum of an officer of so much experience as Sir Charles Napier, must be conclusive on the subjects, which he has treated in his letter, on the state of the Steam Navy, which appeared in *The Times* of the 19th of last

month, and in his subsequent letters, in reply to those of the Duke of Portland and Captain Slade.

If the opinions respecting the armament of steam vessels, which Sir Charles Napier has expressed in those letters, be correct, we undoubtedly possess a very inefficient steam navy, compared with that of France; but possibly his judgment will not be considered infallible, when it is known, that diametrically opposite opinions have been recorded by another distinguished Admiral, of hardly less authority on a naval subject than Sir Charles himself, notwithstanding the modest claim which the latter has put forward to the possession of "greater experience than most naval officers "in the construction of steam vessels."

Sir Charles Napier has pronounced a wholesale condemnation of the steam navy of England, with the happy exception of the Sidon, and has declared it to be "quite unequal to contend with "that of France." This alleged inferiority he attributes to the fact, that, with the exception of the Terrible, the Odin, and the Sidon, our paddle-wheel steam frigates, for so they are classified in the official Navy List, have not been constructed to carry guns on the main deck*, whereas in the French navy, no fewer than twenty have been so constructed, and are regularly armed as frigates, with broadside guns.

The apprehensions which may have been created by this comparison, apparently so much to the disadvantage of England, will, in some respects at least, be removed by a perusal of the following extract from the celebrated note of the Prince de Joinville—an officer, who, it must be almost needless to add, enjoys the highest reputation in the naval service of his own country; and it will be observed, that although the note was written several years ago, the extract is as applicable as ever to the point on which the two Admirals are at issue.

The Prince de Joinville observes: "First on the list of the French "steam navy, we find figuring three ships of 450-horse power—Le "Gomer, l'Asmodée, and l'Infernal, described as frigates. The two "first have made satisfactory trials, with reference to quick sailing; "but they were unable to take on board the armament intended for "them. The Gomer, with her complement of fuel and her twenty "guns, was unable to keep at sea; it will be necessary to reduce

* They were constructed to carry guns on the main deck, but could not.

" either her complement of fuel, or her artillery. The latter has " been determined on. The Gomer has sailed fairly enough, but it " was no longer as a ship of war, but as a packet-boat; the whole " of her artillery consisted of eight guns—two of 80, and six how- " itzers of 30-lbs., placed in narrow port-holes in the ship's sides— " a weak and useless armament; and besides, in this condition, the " ship laboured considerably in bad weather.

" As to l'Asmodée, she appears to have succeeded better than " the Gomer; but they both want power, and in bad weather " their movements are paralyzed. However, I admit willingly, " that if they are fitted out with a suitable armament, they " might be rendered good ships of war.

" Before proceeding further, it may be useful to explain what " I mean, as far as steam ships are concerned, by a suitable arma- " ment; this I shall do in a few words.

" We know, that in steam-vessels the motive power is placed " in the centre. Here, then, we have the vulnerable part, since " the existence of the ship depends thereon, and we are right in " saying, that in steam ships, the centre, or the sides, afford the " weak point.

" The extremities, on the contrary, by their distance from the " motive power, by the sharpness of their shape, and the little " surface they present, in comparison with the sides, afford a " better defence to the motive power, or leave it exposed to less " danger.

" Here, therefore, we have the strong point.

" This is a fundamental principle; it establishes a marked, " essential difference, between the sailing-ship and the steam- " vessel; between their mode of fighting; between the arma- " ment which suits the first, and the armament suitable to the " second.

" In the sailing vessel it is the sides which afford this strong- " hold; here are arranged its complement of guns; it is therefore " best and most rational to bring it into action presenting the " sides; from this flows the style of battle, and the whole system " of tactics, of which it is the basis.

" But in the steam ship, where the strong points are not the " same, where the sides, on the contrary, afford the weak points, " is it equally suitable and rational to arm the sides, when " placing guns there is only to expose them to the fire of the " enemy?

" No. To deny, then, the principle which is here enounced, is " neither common sense nor reason.

" Admitting this principle, the consequence deducible from it " is evident; if the stem and stern form the strong points of the " steam-boat, it is through their means that we ought to carry on " the fight, either for attack or defence; we must furnish the " stem and stern with guns*. Want of space at these parts of the " ship not allowing the display of many guns, we must, as far as " possible, compensate for the smallness of their number, by " giving them a more powerful calibre, to combine, if possible, " the greatest capacity with the greatest effect.

" This, in my opinion, is the general mode of arming which " suits war steam ships.

" In this there is no new theory: the principle which I have " just explained, in its most general expression, has long been " applied in England and the United States; and their example " has been imitated by the Russians, Dutch, and Neapolitans; in " fact, amongst all maritime nations. We alone persist in despi- " sing it, and adopting, for a new class of marine force, an im- " possible and dangerous adaptation; and this obstinate adherence " is, I am compelled to say, the general cause of the inferiority " of our steam fleet."

The Prince de Joinville also observes, while commenting in another place on the armament of the English steam Navy, at the time he wrote—which armament was precisely the same in principle as that of our paddle-wheel steam-frigates at present:—

" To form an idea of the real strength of this (English) steam- " fleet, it is necessary to see closely how much that is formidable " it possesses, and the care and foresight with which everything " appertaining to it is conducted. The English war-steamers " have not been constructed and warranted good for all sorts of " service indifferently. In their construction there has been but " one idea—one object—war. They contain, with a wonderful " aptitude for sea purposes, great swiftness, a powerful artillery, " and great accommodation for the transport of troops."

It thus appears, that while our English Admiral authoritatively asserts that our steam frigates are " unequal to contend with

* The Terrible cannot fight her stern or bow guns on the main deck with efficiency, and the Retribution cannot fight them at all.

those of France," because not in general armed like them—with broadside guns on the main deck—the French Admiral insists, and certainly with more argument, that this very broadside armament on the main deck is the "cause of the inferiority of the French steam fleet;" and further, that the two Admirals agree only in running down the steam navy of their own country, and in holding up that of their neighbours as a model of perfection.

Many of the objections which before existed to arming steam vessels with broadside guns have been removed by the adoption of the screw, which admits of the whole of the machinery, including the propeller, being placed below the water line, where it is comparatively secure from injury by shot; and I find, on reference to the Navy List, that the screw frigates have been constructed to carry broadside guns on the main deck; and two of these vessels, the Termagant*, and the Dauntless, each armed with twenty-four guns, being ten more than are carried by the Sidon, are now ready to be commissioned. I also find that the horse power of both these vessels is greater than that of the Sidon, and Sir Charles Napier is therefore in error when he includes them among the frigates with "only auxiliary screws." He is also in error when he states that the Penelope has been "obliged to give up her main-deck guns," the fact being that those guns were only temporarily removed in order to admit of the crew being more conveniently berthed on the main deck (contrary to the usual practice on board frigates) while serving on the pestilential coast of Africa.

Our actual force of steam vessels, regularly armed as frigates, at sea, or ready to be commissioned, is thus exactly double what it is represented to be by Sir Charles Napier in his first letter, and it is just possible that some of our other steam frigates, armed as they are with guns of the heaviest calibre at the extremities, might prove not "unequal to contend with those of France," especially with such of them as, like the Gomer and Asmodée, have been reduced to the somewhat awkward alternative of leaving, when sent to sea, either their guns or their coals behind them!

I would also observe, in illustration of the dependence to be

* A complete failure, and does not carry so heavy a broadside as the Sidon, who mounts twenty-two 68-pounders; the Dauntless and Termagant were not ready for commission.

placed on Sir Charles Napier's comparisons, that in the comparative statement of the steam navies of England and France, contained in his letter in reply to Captain Slade, which appeared in a contemporary, not only has he omitted several wooden steam vessels from the English list, but he has also excluded "our iron steam vessels, because he believes they are considered useless by the Admiralty," while he has included in the list of French steam vessels, no fewer than five built of iron, namely, le Patriote, le Caton, le Chaptal, l'Euménide, and La Gorgone.

It is probable that the gallant Admiral, who appears to be but indifferently informed on the subject upon which he writes, was not aware of the fact of these vessels being built of iron; but he will find it to be so on reference to the last naval "budget" presented to the French Chamber, where he will also find, among other useful information, that the French have, at this moment, either built, or in progress of building, thirty-five iron steam vessels of various classes*.

I am not going to argue whether the opinion respecting iron vessels attributed by Sir Charles Napier to the Admiralty, or the contrary opinion, so confidently expressed in the evidence of Captains Hall and Charlewood (the only officers who had commanded iron steam vessels in action, examined by the Committee on Navy Estimates, which sat last year), be correct, but if iron vessels are to be excluded from the English list, it is obvious that for the purpose of fair comparison they ought to be excluded from the French list also.

Before concluding, I would only add that, while Sir Charles Napier has with parental fondness devoted to the praises of the Sidon a large portion of his first letter, in which he has

> "Been to her faults a little blind,
> And to her virtues very kind,"

he has disposed in a single line of by far the most formidable arm of our naval defences—I mean the steam guard-ships, the success of which has even surpassed the most sanguine expectations, although doubtless the gallant Admiral includes them in his category of "good sailing ships converted into bad steamers."

It appears from the Report of the Committee on the Navy

* The French have been foolish enough to build twenty, and like our own, are given up as useless.

Estimates, that eight of these vessels were ordered to be fitted in the year 1845, on the recommendation of a commission as competent to advise on our naval defences as Sir Charles Napier himself; and although it is to be regretted that only three have as yet been completed, it is satisfactory to know that in the opinion of some of the highest naval authorities, any one of them could blow half a dozen Sidons out of the water in almost as many broadsides.

Trusting, Sir, that these observations may tend to allay the fears of those of your readers in whom Sir Charles Napier may have excited the dread of a French invasion,

I have the honour to remain, your obedient humble servant,

BETA.

THE STEAM NAVY.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, I do not much like replying to anonymous letters, one of which has appeared in a contemporary journal under the signature of "Beta;" but as I have reason to think I know who "Beta" is, I shall make an exception in his favour. As I am not in the secrets of the Admiralty, though I suspect he is, I do not know who the Admiral is to whom he alludes as having given opinions diametrically opposite to mine. As I have not seen those opinions, I cannot reply to them. As to his sneer at my saying I had greater experience than most naval officers in the construction of steam vessels, I shall merely observe that that observation applied to a time when steam was little known, and when I had constructed no less than six steam vessels, four of which were of iron, and I bought my experience at a tolerably high price.

"Beta" has brought the Prince de Joinville to his assistance; but the Prince wrote in 1844, I wrote in 1849, and notwithstanding his opinion, I have no hesitation in saying there is no comparison whatever between the large French steamers and ours. I have seen them both, and though they are very far from perfection, they would blow ours out of the water. But the question is not whether steamers should carry broadside guns;

it is, are our steamers constructed to carry broadside guns, having ports and bolts fitted for that purpose, capable of carrying them or not? It is well known they are not, therefore they are failures; but the Admiralty themselves settled the question of broadside guns, because they lengthened a forty-six-gun frigate sixty feet, with the hope of her carrying them, and they have since been removed. "Beta" says this was done, "in order to admit of the "crew being more conveniently berthed on the main deck, while "serving on the pestilential coast of Africa." I think "Beta" had better have kept that to himself. A pretty frigate indeed, that is obliged to have her guns removed to lodge her people. They also built the Terrible, Sidon, Odin, and Leopard, to carry broadside guns, and the Retribution is going to Woolwich to take a smaller engine, in order that she may do so also, and perhaps we shall be told by-and-by, this is done to give better lodging to the crew.

In addition to this, I believe all those now on the stocks, and capable of carrying main-deck guns, are to be so armed; but they are too small; not one of them will have a clear main deck, and not one of them will have good stowage; and I do think, that after all that has been said and written, and with the experience we have had, the present Admiralty deserve great censure for having laid those vessels down on their present plan; and I do hope and trust, that they will put a stop to such a system of construction, which has continued too long, and cost the country enormous sums of money.

I now come to the screws. "Beta" says the Termagant and Dauntless are armed with twenty-four guns, being ten more than the Sidon, have a greater horse-power, and are now ready for commissioning. I will shew how little "Beta" knows about the matter, and I will also show that the Termagant is as great a failure as any of them. In the first place, she is not ready for commissioning. She was built at Deptford; had a great part of her fittings done in Mr. Young's yard; aud came round to Portsmouth to get bulwarks put on her quarter-deck to protect her people from musketry, which they had forgotten to do at Deptford, and all this at a very great expence. She is of 1450 tons; has a 620-horse engine, which occupies eighty-five feet; stows only 222 tons of coal in her coal-boxes, six weeks' provision for 320 men, and fifty-three tuns of water; she has no after magazine

—no cockpit; and can only berth 120 men. She mounts four ten-inch guns, and two eight-inch on the upper deck, and eighteen 32-pounders on the main deck, and is said to go ten knots. She is the most perfect thing of that kind I ever saw, and, had she been properly built, would have mounted forty guns.

The Sidon is only 1327 tons; did mount fourteen 32-pounders on the main deck, and four 56-pounders on the upper deck, and is now to mount fourteen 68-pounders on the main deck, six 68-pounders and two ten-inch guns on the upper deck; has a clear main deck, with the exception of the shaft; can berth her crew below; carries three months' provisions, and seventy-five tuns of water; has an after magazine and cockpit; can stow nearly 700 tons of coal in her boxes; has excellent store rooms; is a complete frigate; and will walk round and round the Termagant. I have not examined the Dauntless; but so far is she from being ready for commissioning, she is now in dock to be lengthened by the stern, and when they are both finished they will be very imperfect, and would have been much more efficient had they had engines of 200 or 300-horse power. So much for building two vessels before trying one.

I should like to know where does "Beta" find exactly double the number of steam frigates at sea, or ready for commissioning, to what has been represented by Sir Charles Napier in his first letter?

Is the Penelope one of those whose guns are removed, as "Beta" says, to berth her men more conveniently, but, as I say, because she cannot carry them? As both the Sidon and she will be ready about the same time, I shall have an opportunity of proving that he is wrong and I am right.

The Termagant is, I suppose, one of them; but she is in course of getting bulwarks on her quarter-deck, and is not ready for commissioning.

The Dauntless is one now in dock to be lengthened, and will probably not be ready for commissioning these three months. I must, however, thank the Admiralty for following my advice in taking the steamers in hand, and I wish they would go a little further, and put every shipwright we have upon them, such as they are, and get them finished; but even when the Dauntless and Termagant are finished, though full powered, they will not be so efficient as the Arrogant, which is only auxiliary,

or the Amphion, the latter of which had her bows altered twice at an expense of £7,000 or £8,000 (and I strongly suspect "Beta" had a hand in it) and after two years' bungling was at last made to go tolerably well by the great exertions of Mr. Dinnen. Her mainmast was stepped in an iron stanchion, which began to give way, and was obliged to be repaired; had it broken, the mast would have gone through her bottom. She was paid off last year, and, I suppose, has been in the hands of the doctor ever since.

"Beta" says, "it is quite possible that some of our other steamers, armed as they are with guns of the heaviest calibre at the extremities, might prove not unequal to contend with those of France, especially with such of them as, like the Gomer and Asmodée, have been reduced to the somewhat awkward alternative of leaving, when sent to sea, either their guns or their coals behind them.

May I ask "Beta" whether he forgot, when he wrote this, that in the preceding paragraph he told us the Penelope left *her guns behind*, to berth her crew more conveniently?

I was not aware that I had omitted any of the wooden steam corvettes; but on looking over the lists, I find I left out the Basilisk, Desperate, Fury, and Geyser; but to counterbalance that, I gave in my list the Phœnix (a screw) Urgent, and Trident, neither of which is a corvette; so that, in number, I was only one short.

The following, which have been published in a morning paper celebrated for its scurrility—Alecto, Archer, Firefly, and Prometheus, cannot be considered corvettes. The Magicienne is just launched. The Niger, Encounter, and Rattler, are screws, and the Rhadamanthus is a trooper; so that I was not much mistaken; and they came under my observation, "that, in addition to these, "the French have fifty-two steam tenders from 20 to 160-horse "power; and we have also a number of small craft, of various "sizes, I believe superior to the French."

I omitted the screws of both nations, as I think they can only be looked upon as auxiliaries, of which more by and by. I was not aware that the French had been so foolish as to construct iron vessels. "Beta" says they have built five, and thirty are building. That may be a consolation to "Beta," but it is none to me, and only proves that the French Admiralty are just as injudicious as the English Admiralty. As "Beta" still sticks to his iron vessels,

he had better read Captain Chad's evidence, who was witness to the experiments tried upon them*.

" Beta" allows that the Sidon has some virtues. I wish I could find any in the iron vessels to recompense us for their enormous expense. Had " Beta" a seat in the House of Commons when I warned them against building powerful iron steamers, when the Secretary of the Admiralty said, " We are building forty," and was cheered by his friends—was " Beta" present ?

He says I disposed of the steam guard ships, by far the most formidable of our naval defences, in a single line.

Now, I think I know more about these vessels than " Beta" does. I have had two of them under my orders, and know what they can do. They have been called " steam block-ships," and " steam guard-ships." Now, they are neither one nor the other. Had they been block-ships, they ought to have been heavy-armed hulks, and a steamer could move them about when wanted. Had they been guard-ships, they would have been better without engines and much less expensive. They are sailing ships with an auxiliary screw, and in the event of war, would be the first ships sent to sea. They would be the advanced squadron of a fleet, and in light winds, they would use their screws and bring an unwilling enemy to action, and if engaging a willing enemy, they would be kept in reserve ready to throw their whole force on any particular point they might be wanted, and as such they will be most useful vessels: but there was no excuse for the Admiralty at once cutting up four line-of-battle ships and four frigates before trying one. Three line-of-battle ships are persevered in, two are now finished, after three years' bungling, at an enormous expense, and a third is about being tried; I should then like to see the bill.

The Amphion, I believe, is the only frigate finished, the present board having suspended the others, not being disposed to run *hurry skurry* into such enormous expenses without previous trials, much to the regret of " Beta."

It was not necessary for " Beta" to refer to the report of the Committee of the Navy Estimates, to know that eight of these vessels were ordered to be cut up, for I strongly suspect he himself signed the order.

* He had better read the reports now printed by order of the House of Commons.

" Beta" is quite correct in supposing I meant these ships " as being good sailing ships converted into bad steamers." They are bad steamers in many respects, and have cost thousands of pounds ; and it would have been much better to have built one or two line-of-battle ships for that purpose, and they would have been as far superior to the present ones, as the Arrogant is to the frigates that were cut up, and I trust nothing will induce the present board to permit any more experiments of the same nature. They are, I know, trying their hands on the Sanspareil*, laid down for a line-of-battle ship, but now lengthened for a screw frigate, and I trust they have well considered the subject. I hope the builder and the engineer have been brought together in the presence of the surveyor, who I am sure, would put them right; though that has not yet been done as regards the Leopard, notwithstanding all the warnings they have had.

I now take leave of " Beta," and I recommend him to turn his hand to some other trade, for that of ship-building he knows nothing about, and is too old to learn. If he is inclined to continue this controversy, he ought to sign his real name, which would give him more weight with the public if right, and, if wrong, he must take the consequence.

I remain, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

To the Right Honourable Lord John Russell.

My Lord, Mr. Tierny said in the House of Commons, " Give me a well manned Navy, and a full exchequer, and I will defy the world."

Captain Rous said, " A great part of the national debt has been incurred in building ships and pulling them to pieces."

I shall take these two observations for my text, and examine whether they are correct or not.

When Lord Auckland came into office in 1847, he got up a channel squadron, consisting of five sail of the line, and as many

* I read in the newspaper the other day, that the Sanspareil could not use her stern guns; I trust this is not correct.

steamers. This was done, I presume, in consequence of the disagreement with France about the Spanish marriages. Lisbon was the head-quarters of that squadron, which varied from six to four sail of the line, as it became necessary to relieve the ships on foreign stations. When the revolution broke out in France in February, 1848, one three-decked ship was sent to the Mediterranean, and one to Madeira for the Queen Dowager, and two and a frigate, with a proportion of steam vessels, to Cork, to be in readiness to check any revolutionary movement in Ireland; and I have reason to believe that the facility with which the marines of that squadron were moved from port to port on the coast, with the imposing appearance of part of it in Queenstown and part in Kingstown, very much tended to prevent an outbreak in that country. After the failure of the great Chartist movement in England, things appeared to get more quiet in Ireland, and the squadron was recalled to Spithead in May. The Canopus was paid off; the Prince Regent took her place; and shortly after it was reinforced by the Bellerophon, Blenheim, several steam vessels and corvettes, and in July we again sailed for Cork with four sail of the line, one frigate, one corvette, one screw corvette, three brigs, and a steamer. The object of this squadron was to try the qualities of the several vessels previous to proceeding to their different stations, as well as to be at hand for unforseen accidents. Ireland became again disturbed, a rebellion was threatened, and the squadron, as before, was distributed on various parts of the coast. A very strong force of steamers was collected at Kingstown, ready to move troops whither they might be wanted. Owing to the energetic and judicious arrangements of Lord Clarendon, the rebellion was put down, and the squadron proceeded to sea to try the different vessels, and practise evolutions, so much required by all branches of the service, from the Admiral downwards. After ten days' cruise, the squadron returned to Queenstown, and finally to Spithead, the corvettes and brigs proceeded to their respective stations, and a strong force of steamers remained in Ireland. Shortly after this, the Bellerophon was ordered to the Mediterranean, Blenheim and Amphion were laid up, and the Powerful, which had been lying at Spithead, half manned, for nearly a year, took the Bellerophon's place.

The squadron, now composed of the St. Vincent, Prince Regent, Powerful, Orestes, Rifleman, Plumper, Reynard, and Strombol,

then sailed for Lisbon, where they arrived after a very long and very boisterous passage on the 4th of January. It was intended to cruize as far as the Canary Islands, and return to Lisbon; but a dispute having arisen with the Emperor of Morocco, the squadron, joined by Harlequin, left Lisbon and went to Gibraltar, where they anchored at night, on the 27th of January, and were joined by the Sidon and Polyphemus. The appearance there of the squadron, which was reinforced by the Rodney and Vanguard on their way home, settled the Morocco question in a satisfactory manner. The latter ships were ordered home, Regent and Powerful to the Mediterranean, Orestes to the Cape, and shortly after the squadron was broken up, ordered home, and paid off. Seven thousand men were turned adrift as fast as possible; and two half-manned ships, one at Portsmouth and one at Queenstown took the place of the channel squadron, which I believe was as efficient as any squadron that ever swam the seas. Officers and men had become accustomed to sail in line, and keep their stations in the night, so necessary for the preservation of the ships, besides going through evolutions, which in time of peace, they have few opportunities of learning. The breaking up of the squadron was to please Mr. Cobden and his friends; and, may I ask, what economy has it led to? Russia made an unreasonable demand on Turkey; we became alarmed—the two half-manned ships were completed, the very steamers that were paid off have been brought forward, and several vessels of different descriptions been commissioned, and, had things turned out serious, we were at the mercy of Russia, the 7000 men that had been turned adrift were nowhere to be found, and nothing left but to fall back on the coast blockade.

The Turkish question is now settled, the Baltic frozen, and we are safe; but, my Lord, let me ask your Lordship where we should have been had the Emperor of Russia persisted in his unjustifiable demands? His Black Sea fleet would have been in the Golden Horn before ours could have been in the Dardanelles; and when there we had not steamers to tow them to Constantinople. This is not all; the Russian fleet in the Baltic, of from twenty to thirty sail of the line, might have appeared on our coast, and dictated to us what terms they pleased with regard to Turkey; we were powerless, and must have submitted, or, where would have been our trade? where would have been our funds? and even, I may ask, where would have been the capital of Great

Britain? Had they thought proper to have played a more prudent game, they might have sent their fleet to the Mediterranean, where they would have found friendly ports, and satisfied themselves with the settlement of the Turkish question. Had our channel squadron been kept up—and had the three flag ships been efficient ships, as they ought to be—they would soon have been manned, formed the nucleus of a squadron, and kept Russia in check till our fleet was ready. And here I may ask for what reason are the three flag ships inefficient? That system was once tried before, and given up as improper, and now we are trying it again. These ships should be constantly ready, and in the event of emergency, the Admirals and their staff turned over to three other ships to get them ready, and Captains, Officers, and men appointed to those they had left. So much, my Lord, for the first part of my text. I think I have shown we have anything but a well-manned navy. I now come to the second.

On the 1st of January 1815, the list of our Navy was as follows:—

Three-decked ships	22
Two-decked ships	159
Fifty forty-four-gun ships, on two decks	26
Frigates of thirty guns and upwards.....	162
Ditto under thirty guns	50
Ships and vessels under 20 guns	328

showing a total of 747 ships of all descriptions, not including ships building, store ships, receiving ships, &c. I shall now see what has become of them. Of the twenty-two three-decked ships, there remain four fit for sea, two for harbour service, one Seamen's Hospital ship, and one gunnery ship. All the rest have disappeared, and two prison and hospital ships besides. Whether they were all worn out, or made away with, to be replaced by larger ships, I am not prepared to say. Six were built between 1765 and 1788, four between 1793 and 1800, and nine between 1801 and 1814; they have been replaced by nine ships of 120 guns, one of 116 guns, and three of 104. After the long experience we had during the war, the country had a right to expect that the three-decked ships built since should have been perfect, particularly as we had one ship, the Caledonia, allowed by all hands to be faultless; but the Admiralty of the day thought otherwise; at an expense of £92,000 she was converted into a ship which sails

badly, and carries her ports lower than before. Lord Exmouth asked as a favour that she might not be spoilt, in vain.

The Britannia is said to be after the Caledonia, before she was altered; but that cannot be, as she is very crank; the Howe and St. Vincent*, by the Surveyor of the Navy, very crank; the Neptune, Nelson, Royal George, Royal William, and St. George, are said to be after the Caledonia, and I hope they are; but if they are like the Prince Regent, which was likened to the Caledonia, but so crank, that she was cut down, it is not saying much for them; the Trafalgar and Waterloo, after the Caledonia, enlarged—the former is a good ship, but does not sail—the latter I suppose will be like her; the Camperdown was built after the Impregnable, and is good for nothing as a three-decker; the Princess Charlotte and Royal Adelaide after the lines of Victory; the former is a good ship, though small—the latter I know nothing about; all the ships of three decks that have been yet tried say very little for the acquirements of those who built them. We shall now see what the new system has produced. The Queen is certainly a good ship; I have tried her in fine weather, and I never saw a three-decker equal to her. She went through several alterations, it is true, but I speak of her as I found her. In light winds, and the sails clewed up, with a moderate swell, the St. Vincent, by clinometer, rolled sixty times in the hour, twelve degrees to leeward and four degrees to windward; the Queen 201 rolls, fourteen degrees to leeward, eleven degrees to windward; the Conopus 278 rolls, fifteen degrees to leeward, nine degrees to windward; Albion 480 rolls, fifteen degrees to leeward, ten degrees to windward. I must, however, observe, that the St. Vincent is a particularly-easy ship; and Sir Baldwin Walker, a much better judge, says, in bad weather the Queen is perfect. The Royal Frederick, Victoria, Prince of Wales, Royal Sovereign, Windsor Castle, and Marlborough, are, I believe, built after the Queen; and I hope they are so, as in general our attempts at improvement have turned out failures; and certainly the Admiralty took an odd manner to get information, for when a Committee of Reference was appointed, the instructions were as follows: —"In the event of any nautical difference of opinion, between

* The poop and upper deck guns are now about to be removed from the St. Vincent.

" the Surveyor and the Committee thus constituted, the report of " the Surveyor is to be referred to the Committee, and that of " the Committee to the Surveyor, who are to state, after having " duly weighed the arguments in favour of their respective views, " whether or not they still adhere to their respective opinions." I wonder whether the Surveyor ever attended to such an absurd instruction ?—I should think not; and the Committee of Reference has been abolished. The San Josef is now broken up; she was a good ship, but being a foreigner, was never copied. The Royal Albert, by Mr. Laing, is larger than the Queen, and there I hope we intend to stop, for unless we can produce a larger class of men, they never will be able to furl the courses. If more two-decked ships are required, we had much better cut down our bad three-deckers, and replace them with new ships. The Prince Regent was worthless as a three-decker, but makes a powerful ninety-gun ship. This is certainly an expensive means of getting good two-decked ships, by first building them up as three-deckers and cutting them down; but as we have made blunders we had better acknowledge them.

I now come to the two-decked ships; they have been cut up without mercy. At the end of the war we had 159 ships of two decks, not including those on the stocks; twenty-three prison ships, receiving ships, powder magazines, &c. Of the 159, four have been turned into bad steamers; 11 cut down to frigates; 18 turned into convict ships, lazarettes, receiving ships, &c., and 111 have disappeared altogether, and all the prison ships, depôts, &c., except one. Several two-decked ships have been broken up, cut down, or converted, without being at sea, as follows:—The Redoutable, built in 1815, costing £86,049, was broken up in 1841. The Anson, built in 1812, costing £88,762, turned into a convict ship in 1843. The Vindictive, built in 1813, costing £81,540, was cut down in 1832, and was then put out of sight in the upper part of the harbour for ten years, because Mr. Blake, who cut her down, contrived to get six guns a-head, in a line with the keel, which no other builder had thought of. She has been at sea two commissions, has been highly spoken of, and is now ready for a third. Since 1815 we have launched forty-nine two-decked ships. The Minotaur, costing £76,662, has been converted into a convict ship, without being at sea; so has the Black Prince and Defence, costing, I suppose, as much. Two, which have

been at sea, have been turned into store ships and coal depôts; one into a trooper, and one burnt; two of them were only built in 1819; there now remain forty. Of the war two-decked ships, which have disappeared, seven were built between 1765 and 1780; twenty between 1783 and 1793; six between 1796 and 1800; and thirty-one between 1800 and 1814. Of the immense number of ships taken from the enemy during the war, the Canopus and Implacable alone remain. Twenty-two convict ships—receiving ships—have disappeared also. It is not possible that all these ships should have been worn out. The Canopus, taken in 1797, and the Implacable, in 1805, are still in existence; what year they were built in I do not know, but as eleven have been converted into frigates, it is presumable that others were fit for the same purpose. We know that the Tremendous was sentenced at Woolwich to be broken up, but was saved, became a frigate, has been to the Pacific, and is now ready for sea. We have now, in addition to the war line-of-battle ships, two-decked ships of various builds. Sir Robert Seppings introduced the ninety-two gunned ships, on two decks, the same tonnage as the large three-deckers. Of that class we have three. The Rodney is the only one tried; she is a fine warlike ship, but is not a very superior sailer. The late Surveyor launched two ninety-gun ships and nine eighties; there are various opinions about them; in smooth water I believe they sail well when not overloaded; but when deep in a head sea, they lose much of their sailing qualities, and if the reports laid before Parliament be true, they roll terrifically. But without giving any opinion of them, one thing is quite certain: if they are bad ships, there are too many built and building; if they are good ships, why have they been discontinued? That a set was made against the late Surveyor is most true—whether just or not I cannot say; and we all know how difficult it is to get at the truth. My own opinion is, that we plunged into a new system with too much precipitation, and have abandoned it without being certain we have adopted a better. The present plan, I believe, is to give more length, reduce the breadth, and flatten the floors of the late Surveyor's ships that are not too far advanced; and I do trust they will try one before they go headlong into this new system.

No shipbuilder of the old school has as yet produced anything remarkable as a line-of-battle ship, and it is singular that the best

two-decked ships we have for all purposes are those built after the Canopus, which ship Sir George Cockburn very properly brought forward and saved from destruction. The 70-gunned ships that take the place of the 74's have not been tried; there are two of them, and we seem to have quite forgotten that there are such seas as the North Sea and Baltic, where small ships on two and three decks, with a light draught of water, are indispensable. There are also many places where the like qualification is necessary; and I well recollect that, during the siege of Cadiz, we were obliged to look up all our old 64's, with a light draught of water, so that they might lay clear of the enemy's shells. Another thing we seem to have forgotten—that all the work of the war was done by the 74's, and that the large ships did not stand the blockade so well as the small ones. I shall be told, no doubt, that our 74's are not fit to go into the line, as other nations have increased the size and calibre of their ships. That is quite true; but there was no necessity for letting them go to decay, and breaking them up. Some have been turned into 50-gun frigates, and we are now building frigates of 60 guns. Had the upper deck guns and poops been removed from the small 74's, as was done with the Elephant—which, by the by, was broken up afterwards without being at sea—they would have made very good 60-gun frigates till they were worn out. Then, and not till then, should we have built frigates of that magnitude, if it was found they were good ships at sea.

The 50-gun ships and 44's on two decks, twenty-six in number, are all gone. We persisted in building these ships many years after the youngest boy in the Navy knew they were useless. The last, I think, was the Isis, and she was converted into a frigate. I blame those who continued to build them at a great expence, and I think those who got rid of them would have shown more judgment, had they converted them into receiving ships, coal depôts, &c., instead of many tolerable two-decked ships. The greatest slaughter of all was the frigates, from thirty guns and upwards. At the end of the war we had 162, besides store and receiving ships. The large frigates were thought perfection till the American war proved they were totally incapable of contending with the large American frigates; but notwithstanding that, and the number we had on hand, I find, by a Parliamentary return dated the 24th of April,

1846, since the year 1815 we have built no less than forty-five from 42 to 46 guns, only thirteen of which have been to sea.

I shall first examine what has become of the war frigates, and afterwards what has become of the 42 and 46-gun frigates built since 1815. It appears by the Navy List, published by authority, and also by other official documents, that the 162 frigates have disappeared, except seven fit for sea; three have been cut down to corvettes, and one turned into a screw steamer; twenty-five have been turned into coal depôts, receiving ships, and lazarettes; two into troop ships; and 125 have disappeared altogether. Of those built since 1815, twelve have been turned into depôt and coal hulks, four cut down to corvettes, three into screw steamers, one paddle steamer, one burnt, one lost, twenty-three remain as frigates. Several of the twelve depôts have never been at sea. The Amphion, a screw vessel, had her bows altered twice, at an expence of £6928, and was two or three years in the hands of the engineer, and I don't know if she is ready yet. The Horatio has had her stern fitted for a screw in an extraordinary manner, but has not yet been tried; nor have the other three. Twenty-two out of the forty-five built since 1815 remain as frigates; generally speaking, the 42 and 46-gun frigates were good ships. Six frigates of thirty-two guns, 12-pounders, built in the war, were useless. I commanded two of them; they were very crank, and could neither fight nor run away. Of those cut down without being at sea, the Amazon, built in 1821, cost £42,920—was cut down in 1844: the Dædalus, in 1826, cost £35,609—cut down in 1844: Brilliant, built in 1814, cost £49,803; Thames, built in 1823, cost £37,051; Bacchus, in 1817, cost £34,691; and Hebe, in 1826, cost £32,484—were turned into hulks. In addition to these, the Trincomalee and Amphitrite, costing, I suppose, as much as the others, were cut down to corvettes, and the latter had her bow lengthened, without doing her any good. Tigris and Statira, on the stocks, well advanced, were pulled to pieces, and their materials converted to other purposes.

The line-of-battle ships and frigates built since 1815, and broken up, cut down, and converted, without being at sea, cost £619,700; and, I dare say, the cutting down, converting, &c., did not cost less than £200,000, if I may judge by the expense of cutting down and repairing the Dublin, which amounted to £52,839. I think it was after the first commission that an attempt

was made to break her up, and an estimate of the repairs necessary, was sent in, amounting to £40,000. This rather alarmed their Lordships: they ordered her to be re-surveyed; the estimate was reduced to £10,000, and it actually cost £8937 15s. 10d. The expense of building the Amphitrite and Trincomalee I have no return of; but I suppose it could not be less than £70,000, besides the cutting down and lengthening. We have now on the Navy List four frigates of sixty guns building; twenty-seven frigates of fifty guns, including those cut down—ten building; thirty-eight from thirty to forty-six guns—one building; all, I believe, good ships, though few in comparison with what we had at the end of the war.

Of frigates from twenty to thirty guns, we had in 1815 fifty, many of which never ought to have been built. Six, I believe, mounted twenty-two carronades; one of them and a corvette were taken by an American frigate—they sailed too badly to escape, and their shot could not reach their opponent. They were much worse than the old twenty-eight's, such as the Hinde, which ship might have been copied, if it was thought necessary to build such small frigates; but the opinion was then, as it is now, that no frigate-built ship should be under thirty guns. The ship sloops of sixteen guns, but nominally twenty-two, were converted into frigates by Mr. Yorke's Admiralty, which class of vessels was persisted in long after all practical men thought them useless. They have now all disappeared, except the Perseus, receiving-ship, in the river.

Nevertheless, twenty-four ships of twenty-eight guns, commonly called "donkeys," were built after the war: one has been cut down to a corvette, and answered much better—the rest have all disappeared but ten; and six converted into store and receiving ships, and a new class of 28-gun frigates, pierced for thirty guns, were brought forward by the late Surveyor, much superior to the "donkeys," but much inferior, I think, to the old ships from forty-two to forty-six guns, the greater part of which have disappeared, as I have already shown.

Some of the "donkeys" were built by amateurs, but were not much better. Two of them—the Challenger and Tyne—were so crank, that, had they engaged each other with a press of sail, the shot of the weather ship would have gone *under the keel of the lee one*, and the shot of the lee ship *over the trucks of the*

weather one. Of vessels under twenty guns, there were no less than 328. The best class of these vessels were the 18-gun brigs; we used to think them perfection, but the Admiralty of the day thought otherwise, and built a set of corvettes, longer than the brigs. They were soon discarded, as being bad vessels and unsafe. Lord Spencer's Admiralty built a whole lot of flat and useless gun brigs, and named them after his Lordship's hounds. They could neither sail nor keep to windward, and were, in consequence, ill adapted to blockade an enemy's port: they are all gone, and that class will never again appear on the List of the Navy.

Of the eighteen-gun brigs there are none left; some of them were turned into ships at an expense of £800 or £900, and did not answer. They have disappeared, together with all the small craft of every description: their place has been taken by a number of sixteen-gun brigs, built by the late Surveyor, and I believe they are considered much superior to the eighteen-gun brigs both in weight of metal and sailing. Before they were built, a class of sloops were brought forward by different builders: they are not bad vessels, and still in existence, but much inferior to the three corvettes of the late Surveyor.

Another class of vessels was built—I mean the 10-gun brigs; they were begun in 1808, when no less than thirty-six were built. I suppose they were intended to take the place of the flat brigs, and they seem to have been built with the same precipitation. After the war was over, we continued building, though for what purpose, God only knows, and launched no less than sixty-four; four foundered at sea, and two hundred and sixty men perished; six, turned into packets, were lost, with one hundred and sixty-eight men besides passengers; seven were reduced in armament, and top-hamper; thirty-five have been broken up or sold; twelve have been turned over to the coast-guard or breakwaters. I have before said that a number of 16-gun brigs have been built on the plan of the late Surveyor, to take the place of the 18-gun brigs; and a class of 10-gun brigs, far superior to the old ones, took their place.

To sum up the whole, we have got rid, in various ways, since 1815, of thirteen three-decked ships and two receiving ships; one hundred and fifty-three two-decked ships and twenty-two receiving ships; twenty-one fifty's and forty-four's on two-decks, and nine receiving ships; and one hundred and eighty frigates (from thirty

to fifty guns) and seventeen receiving ships; sixty-five frigates under thirty guns; four hundred and eighteen vessels, of all descriptions, under twenty guns, and twenty receiving ships. We have built fourteen three-decked ships; forty-nine two-decked ships, one of which has been turned into a troop, one into a store ship, two into convict hulks, one into a lazarette, one into a coal depôt, one burnt, one broken up, one disappeared in Canada—leaving forty; seventy-three frigates, from thirty to fifty guns; thirty-nine frigates, under thirty guns; one hundred and sixty-one vessels, of all descriptions, under twenty guns, not including small craft and steamers.

In addition to the expense attending breaking up ships and building new ones, thousands of pounds have been spent in altering ships' sterns and magazines. No less than twenty-eight ships had their sterns altered on Sir Robert Sepping's plan, by a return of the 24th of April 1846; but the expense was not stated. I suppose they were ashamed of it. Twenty-six ships, of different sizes, by the same return, had their sterns altered on another plan; some of them twice, and the Boscawen three times; some also that had been altered by Sir Robert Seppings before, were again altered on the second plan.

No less than sixty-eight ships, by the same return, had their magazines altered—one of them three times, and eight of them twice. The expense, I suppose for the same reason, is not returned; but the reason given in the return was, " That there " was no means of ascertaining it." The same return gives all the ships cut down, as eight three-deckers, fourteen two-deckers, ten frigates, one corvette. How many more have been cut down since, I have no Parliamentary Return to guide me; but your Lordship may form an opinion of the total expence, when it cost £52,839 to repair and cut down the Dublin.

From 1815 to 1820, the Navy cost the country £26,262,783; in this are not included the wages and victualling, which do not appear in the estimates. From 1821 to 1849, the estimates amount to £156,975,858; of that the dockyards have absorbed £44,396,050, and the half-pay and pensions £47,422,378.

The Navy estimates last year, amounted to £7,068,730 of which only £2,079,063 went for wages and victuals; while the dockyards and materials cost no less than £2,568,977. It is in this branch that we ought to economize, not in the effective of

the Navy. Let us employ fewer men, and expend fewer materials.

I have shown what we have been building and pulling to pieces since the peace. Our ships could not have worn out so fast. We built bad classes of ships, and have been getting rid of them as fast as possible. We built bad steamers, and have been obliged to build others, and we are still in a wrong direction. We built thirty-three iron steamers that are useless. We built four or five pair of engines that the steamers could not carry, and we have been obliged to build smaller ones that they can carry; there is where the waste is. The Admiralty costs £136,303—£4,503 of which goes to a First Lord, who knows nothing.

I shall say nothing about what is expended in the improvements of yards, because that was necessary; but we went too fast, particularly at Plymouth.

The half-pay and promotions amount to £1,395,072—about two-thirds of the effective force. That would diminish if they would let it alone. Her Majesty has only the power of granting pensions of £1200 a-year. The First Lord of the Admiralty can grant more than that in a day in the way of promotion. I do not want to stop promotion; but I would limit promotion to one for every two removals—this to include everything. At present it is nominally one in three; but there are all sorts of ways of evading that, and it is evaded. The Government must look things in the face—begin in time to economise, and show that they are serious. There must be no more taxation—there must be reduction, or there will be no more income tax.

Naval officers, who are in the habit on board a ship of watching the working of the artificer, and who are obliged to be economical in the expense of stores, as few are supplied, know full well that we do not get the work that we ought to do, and all naval officers know the destruction attending the paying off ships. A ship when first commissioned requires many arrangements that it is impossible for the dockyard to do. During the commission her captain puts her in order, and there is a pride amongst officers to excel each other in the order and beauty of their ships; their storerooms are magnificently fitted, the stores of every description are stowed away with the greatest care. After a service of between three and four years the ship comes home and is paid off with the utmost despatch, her rigging, that would have lasted a year or

two longer, goes to the lot-yard, sails are condemned and cut up, the storerooms are denuded, and the small stores bundled on shore and no more heard of*. What an enormous expense would be saved if ships were kept longer in commission; and, if they required great repairs, another ship was brought forward, and all her stores turned over to her to be worn out without going into that fiery furnace, the dockyard. I have commissioned ships and paid them off, and speak from experience, when the system of paying by measurement was in force; everything that paid well was sure to be destroyed in an incredibly short time. When I commissioned the Galatea, which had been in commission three years, and was well fitted, it was all to begin again.

A Portuguese frigate that brought me home from Lisbon was ordered to be repaired to a certain extent by our Government. The destruction that took place was nearly as much as the Government allowed, and the Portuguese paid the rest of the bills. Bad as their own system was, ours was worse. Our dockyard people have no idea that there is either waste of time or materials in their work; all naval officers are quite aware of it, but we are told we are no judges. Alterations cost an enormous sum of money, and so do the whims of captains who have interest to get alterations made. The dockyards are paid by the day, and more than that, alterations cost money, and if those alterations were fewer, and more work done, less men would be required, and less materials necessary. When a man builds a house he weighs well his plan before hand, because he knows full well what alterations will cost him. The superintendents have too much to do; they ought to have under them, for dockyard duty only, an active captain, who should be constantly in the yard, with no office work. The superintendent ought to have the entire power of entering and discharging men when he thought proper. If he jobbed, the Admiralty could punish him; but if the Admiralty job, and they are the greatest jobbers, there is no one to punish them. The "leading men" have not authority sufficient over the men under them; they are only paid a trifle more; they move in the same condition—live, perhaps, next door to each other; their wives and families meet constantly, and zealously enter into the

* Ships are now recommissioned, but as yet it has been impossible to keep them clear of the dockyard.

feelings of their husbands and parents. How then can it be expected that a leading man will choose to find much fault and injure his neighbour? Instead of leading men there ought to be well-paid officers at the head of each gang, so that he would never come into contact with his men except on duty. Some sort of comparison might be made of the work done by different gangs, and those who work the most and destroy the least should be rewarded. There are too many heads of departments—they interfere with each other, and the responsibility is not well defined; and there is too much office work for the heads of departments, and they have not time sufficiently to superintend the various gangs employed in different parts of the yard. When a ship is under repair, the carpenter of the ship, or some one interested in her, ought to have more power and some check over the expense. And if a ship is preparing for commissioning, the captain ought at once to be appointed to superintend her fitting. If she is an advanced ship, he ought to go on board immediately, and so ought the officers and men. No hulks should be allowed, and not a single man from the dockyard employed upon her, except to wedge her masts. But I very much doubt whether we have a ship at any port so completely ready as to be able to receive men. We are now very properly taking the masts out of the advanced ships because they decay. But I may ask how they came in? The fact of decay was ascertained ten or fifteen years ago; the masts were removed, and it was found we had hardly a sound mast in the yard. A new Admiralty comes into office, and they try the same experiment that was found defective by their predecessors. I have said that I would very much reduce the dockyards, but that should be done gradually by suspending entries, and I very much doubt the propriety of bringing up apprentices. They learn to be *mateys* early in life, and never get the better of it. It would be much wiser, when men are entered, that they should be chosen from merchants' yards, where they are better looked after and obliged to work more, and waste less than in Her Majesty's establishments. There are many other ways of reducing our overgrown establishments if we were inclined, but we seem to be going the other way, and are establishing steam factories, and if we make engines, there will be a great addition to the expence, and an end to improvement. We have a factory established at Portsmouth, with a staff that no private yard could

support. The factory and machinery cost about £100,000, and I hope Parliament will move for a return of the work they do, and compare it with what is done in private yards. I believe in that factory we employ one hundred and eighty boiler-makers alone. We had much better limit ourselves to repairing engines and boilers, and let new engines and new boilers be made by private engineers. If a strict hand is not kept on our engineers in the factories, they will gradually go on entering men for repairs, and when they have nothing to do, will begin to make engines, and if they are prevented from that, they will manage to take every steam engine to pieces that comes under their hands. To prevent that as much as possible, and to employ our sea-going engineers, when a steamer is disarmed, I should retain all the engineers and stokers, and let the engines be repaired by them; they would do it much better, and much cheaper, and will only do what is necessary. Put them under an engineer if you please, but let him be an engineer who has been at sea, and has no interest in unnecessarily pulling the engine to pieces*.

We have already begun to make steam boilers at Portsmouth, and if they are not stopped, we shall soon have the yard as full of useless boilers as Woolwich is now.

My opinions relative to the Steam Navy have been so often made public, that it is unnecessary to repeat them. I shall merely observe, that we are still working in the dark and blundering on. Four steam frigates, of 400-horse power, have been laid down by the present Board; they will prove, I fear, much too shallow for frigates, will not have a clear deck, and I doubt whether they will have stowage. I have only seen two of them, neither of which have their stern battery properly arranged; and, singular as it may appear, one steam frigate is fitting at Portsmouth, in a part of the yard, to bring her guns on the stern and quarter, while another is building in another part of the same yard, with only four and a-half feet between the stern ports, much too close to fight them with effect†.

With respect to the screw steamers, as yet we have not been

* Captain Henderson is now at the head of the steam department at Portsmouth, and no steamer goes into the hands of this dockyard, if he can repair them with the engineer afloat: the same thing should be established at other yards.

† This I pointed out, and it was altered.

very successful. The line of battle ships, as far as speed goes, have done very well; but the stowage is almost entirely taken up with machinery. The Amphion has been a long while in hand, and I hope will do well. The Termagant, with a full power of 620-horse, has no deck for her crew (they are on the gun-deck), only stows 370 tons of coals, and steams about eight knots and a half; mounts twenty-four guns, and has very bad stowage. The Arrogant, with an auxiliary screw, is much better, has more room, and goes nearly as fast. The Dauntless is lengthening, and I hope will improve; and I think we have arrived at a certainty that the screw can only be used with effect as an auxiliary, and must be compared to a man sculling a boat. This will give more room, and the ships will be more efficient for all purposes. The Reynard and Plumper sloops are much too small. The former was not safe with heavy guns, but is now improved with a lighter armament. I shall say nothing of the Encounter, as she has not been reported upon, but she, like all the rest, carries much too little fuel. With respect to the iron vessels, by a return laid before Parliament, dated January 25, 1847, we had launched, and were building, no less than thirty-three. They have already cost £376,798. With respect to their efficiency for vessels of war, I shall leave the late Board of Admiralty to settle that question with the present Board, who seem to disapprove of them altogether, and are fitting them out for troop ships, for two reasons: first, because they do not consider iron as a proper material for ships of war, as it has been proved that shot knocks them to pieces; and, secondly, because they could not on trial carry their weights. The Birkenhead, Vulcan, and Megara come under that category. They have been fitted with smaller engines, and so has the Simoom; and so totally ignorant are we of what we are about, that we have put into her smaller engines, though she is more capable of carrying what was first intended; and they have put into the Greenock the engines that were first intended, though she was incapable of carrying them. She has engines of 564-horse power, can only stow 349 tons of coals, and her midship port is little more than four feet out of the water; she is to be made a troop ship of. What these iron vessels will cost I do not know, but I hope some member of Parliament will move for a Return. I think I have shown that what Captain Rous stated in Parliament is not far wrong, "that

" a great part of the national debt has been incurred in building " ships and pulling them to pieces."

I now take leave of your Lordship, with a recommendation that you should alter the constitution of the Board of Admiralty. How, my Lord, is it possible that the affairs of the Navy can be well conducted by four naval officers with a civilian at their head who knows nothing, and a civilian at their tail who knows less than nothing, all working in different rooms, and not knowing what each other are about? Depend upon it, if you do not, the country will take it out of your hands. The Navy is a favourite profession, and no one wishes to see its efficiency impaired; but no one will countenance the extravagant manner in which it is conducted. I have been blamed for writing and publishing my letters. My answer has invariably been that I have tried all other ways in vain; little or no attention is paid to the suggestions of officers, and as a proof of it, I shall observe that I have attended the fitting of the Sidon, in which ship it is natural that I should take an interest; and on seeing things done to her which I disapproved of, and which I represented to the Admiralty, they did not even condescend to give a reply, till I came to town, and mentioned it, and then it was too late. I have no view, my Lord, in writing to you, but to correct the evils that weigh down upon the Navy and the country. Your Lordship must be quite aware, that my observations cannot be agreeable to men in office, and will most probably bring down on me their wrath; but I have too high an opinion of your Lordship's good sense and love for your country, to suppose for a moment that an officer telling your Lordship the wholesome truth will displease you*.

I have the honour to remain,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, For many years past I have been endeavouring to correct abuses in the British Navy, particularly as regards our steam fleet. Finding little or no attention paid to my observations,

* Subsequent letters will show that I misunderstood his Lordship's character.

I, following the example of many others, published in the Times several letters to Lord John Russell, which brought down on me a reproof from Sir Francis Baring. Conceiving that I did not deserve such reproof, I beg to enclose the correspondence which has taken place in consequence, and which I have to request you will publish in your valuable journal.

I think it unnecessary, and perhaps not right, to send you the testimonials alluded to, but they are much at your service, if you wish to see them.

I am, SIR, your obedient servant,

October, 1849. CHARLES NAPIER, Rear-Admiral.

To Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Napier.

MY DEAR SIR CHARLES, With reference to our conversation on Friday, I am desirous that on one point there should be no mistake. As I told you, I feel no personal annoyance at your letter. Official men are fair objects of attack, and there is nothing for which personally I can, or of which I shall complain. On the other hand, I hope I made it clear that I disapprove officially of your correspondence. I wish no mistake, as I consider that you have set a most unfortunate example to the naval service, in having, with your rank and position, written in the newspapers such attacks on those to whom Her Majesty has entrusted the administration of the Navy.

I feel bound to say this, and say it with much regret, as I entertain a high opinion of your professional character, and only doubted your discretion.

I am, MY DEAR SIR CHARLES, yours very truly,

F. T. BARING.

Oct. 15, 1850.

To the Right Honourable Sir Francis Baring.

MY DEAR SIR FRANCIS, I have received your letter of the 15th, and am glad you feel no personal annoyance at my letters.

None was intended. I did not exactly understand—though now I do—that you officially disapproved of my correspondence; and, as your letter is not marked private, I take it I am to consider it official.

You say I have set a most unfortunate example to the Naval Service, in having, with my rank and position, written in the newspapers such attacks on those to whom Her Majesty has intrusted the administration of the Navy.

In reply to this, I beg to observe, that it is bad measures, not men, that cost the country enormous sums, that I have attacked; and I cannot subscribe to the doctrine that a naval officer on half-pay is interdicted from publicly pointing out what is wrong in the management of the affairs of the state, any more than a civilian or a military man.

The late Lord Melville published a letter to Lord Mulgrave on affairs connected with the Navy. Sir John Barrow wrote, when Secretary to the Admiralty, a severe critic on Captain Crawford, for giving a true account of the strength of the Russian Navy. Captain Berkeley, when a Lord of the Admiralty, in a pamphlet disapproved of the undermanning of the Navy, and lost his place, like an honest man. Sir John Barrow replied to his pamphlet, and kept his place, like a courtier. Sir Edward Codrington published a pamphlet on his recall from the Mediterranean*. Captain Plunkett has published much on the Navy, and done a great deal of good. Admiral Bowles publishes. Whether all these gentlemen, and many more, were in favour of or against the Government, I shall not inquire—the principle is the same; but he that boldly points out their faults is the honester man of the two.

Lord John Russell published in the newspapers his famous letter from Edinburgh, that brought him into place for a day. The Marquis of Anglesea published a letter, when Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and was removed; and the Duke of Wellington, Commander-in-Chief in the Army, wrote his celebrated letter on the defenceless state of the country. How it found its way into the papers I neither know nor care: there it was, and a great pity it was not attended to.

After these examples, it is not just to say that I have set an unfortunate example.

* Sir Edward printed and circulated his pamphlet; he says he did not publish it.

You sat in the House of Commons when I did, and you must be aware of my unwearied exertions to correct the errors they were committing; and, had my advice been followed, hundreds of thousands of pounds would have been saved to the country. From the House of Commons I went afloat, and, while there, both publicly and privately, pointed out all the mistakes committed, but to no purpose; for at the moment I write we are blundering on as much as we before did; our experience has done no good; and unless we change our system, I see no prospect of amendment. What is doing in one dockyard is undoing in another; nay, more, what we are doing in one part of the same dockyard we are undoing in another part. Had I been in Parliament, I should have made the same statements that I have now done, and the First Lord of the Admiralty would have scarcely ventured to have said, "I was setting an unfortunate example."

If your doctrine is correct, let us see what it would lead to. A naval officer could not attend a public meeting; or if he did, he must be silent if any naval subject was broached. Should he stand for any place as candidate, and be opposed by a person in office, he would be prevented from stating his opinion how the affairs of the country were carried on; for I hold, whether a man states his opinion in Parliament, in writing, or on the hustings, it is exactly the same—they are all made public by the press—and I only wish I was in Parliament to state mine; be assured you would not see them published in a letter. Your doctrine goes further; for if it is improper for a naval officer to attack the measures of men whom Her Majesty has entrusted with the administration of the Navy, how much more improper must it be to attack the measures of men whom Her Majesty has entrusted with the administration of the country*?

In conclusion, you state you are bound to say what you have done, and it is with much regret, as you entertain a high opinion of my professional character, and you only doubt my discretion. For the first part of this I feel much obliged to you, and for the last part I am not at all angry; for if the First Lord of the Admiralty doubts my discretion, it is most candid to tell me so; for I then know what I have to expect, and am not kept in the dark, and it gives me an opportunity of removing that impression; for if I do not, he would

* This the opposition do every day of their lives.

be very wrong to employ an officer on whose discretion he could not rely.

How you could have formed such an opinion of me, I am at a loss to conceive, for it is not to be found in the records of the Admiralty. If you examine them, you will find no proof of want of discretion in the whole of my service, which I am proud to say will bear comparison with that of any officer, and no one can show more scars or fewer favours. Yours was not the opinion of my esteemed friends Lord Auckland and Lord Palmerston; neither was it the opinion of any one member of your Board, if there is truth in man, which the scurrilous articles in a morning paper, the organ of the Admiralty, during the time referred to, sometimes make me doubt.

I have the honour to be, yours, &c.

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun Hall, Oct. 17, 1849.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty.

Sir, I have the honour of enclosing a letter I have received from Sir Francis Baring, and the reply. It is to the latter part of his letter to which I beg to draw their Lordship's attention, in which he says, "he has a high opinion of my professional character, and only doubted my discretion."

When I heard that the Channel squadron was reorganizing, and to be put under the orders of my late second in command, it appeared to me that the First Lord of the Admiralty, by not reappointing me to the command of the squadron, (which I held for nearly two years, to the entire satisfaction of Lord Auckland and his colleagues,) was carrying out an opinion of me that would damage my professional reputation; I therefore lost no time in waiting on Sir Francis Baring, to endeavour to remove the unfavourable opinion he had formed of me.

After expressing my surprise at his letter, so different from those of his predecessor (Lord Auckland), I handed him some of his Lordship's, Lord Palmerston's, and the late Secretary's letters, extracts of which I have the honour to enclose.

I do not think that, at this time of day, it would be necessary for

an officer of my rank, after fifty years' service, to show, like a youngster soliciting promotion, my credentials to a First Lord, not long in office, and who could have no idea of the feelings of an officer; a gentleman who had been brought up in quite a different line—had been a Lord of the Treasury, a Secretary of the Treasury, a Chancellor of the Exchequer, and finally, First Lord of the Admiralty.

Degrading, Sir, as I felt it, I *did* show Sir Francis Baring my credentials, and their Lordships may judge of my surprise when, after reading them carefully, he told me he would take a letter of Lord Palmerston's as a confirmation of his opinion, or words to that effect.

The letter, Sir, to which he alluded was one from Lord Palmerston, informing me of his having read in some newspaper that I had not been following up the views of the Government, which he regretted, as he had answered to his colleagues for my discretion and obedience to orders. This was followed by another letter from Lord Palmerston, in reply to my explanation, acknowledging his mistake in the handsomest manner, and speaking with admiration of the order and discipline of my squadron.

One would have supposed that an unprejudiced man would have been satisfied; but Sir Francis Baring was quite the reverse.

I think, Sir, I had a right to know from the First Lord of the Admiralty from what circumstances he had formed his opinion of me; but this he thought proper to decline replying to, observing, at the same time, I was my own enemy, and had I accepted the command at Cork I should have been now in Lisbon.

I now thought I had a clue to his conduct to me, and I observed that, if it was owing to my letters on the state of the navy to the Prime Minister, I had not another word to say on the subject; to which he replied, "he would say no such thing."

So, then, Sir, it appears it is my professional reputation that is doubted, and still, Sir, inconsistent as it may appear, had I accepted the Cork command I should have been now in Lisbon.

I did not accept the Cork command, because, after being Commander-in-Chief of the Channel squadron, I could not descend to a Port-Admiral's station without a ship and almost without a boat. But even had I accepted the Cork command, how could I have been sure that I should not have been told, that I already had had a com-

mand and could not expect another? Such things have happened before, and most probably the same interest that got the command of the Channel squadron now would have got it then.

I conceive, Sir, that I have been treated with great indignity, and I told Sir Francis Baring respectfully, and I tell their Lordships respectfully also, that a First Lord of the Admiralty has the power to degrade and dishonour an officer when he pleases, and that he has carried it out to the fullest extent towards me; that I had been affronted and insulted; and if he would read the records of the Admiralty he would not find that an officer of my rank and service had been so treated.

I appeal to their Lordships for protection; I appeal to them to state their opinion of me, to bring before the First Lord a statement of my services (they are at the board), and show him that he has been deceived.

The honour of an officer is like a woman's virtue—it must not be breathed upon. The First Lord of the Admiralty has breathed upon mine, and may breathe it to his Ministerial colleagues, and ruin me for ever.

Had Lord Auckland entertained such an opinion of me—had Lord Palmerston entertained such an opinion of me, would they have written me such letters? Would Lord Auckland have written to say that during the rebellion in Ireland he would sooner see me there than any other officer in the service; that all I had done and proposed doing, would be approved of, and that I enjoyed his entire confidence? Would his colleagues and their secretary have written to me as they did?

Would the Prime Minister and three of his colleagues have paid me a visit at Portsmouth, had they doubted my discretion?

Would Her Majesty have honoured me with a visit on board the St. Vincent unless I had enjoyed the confidence of her Government? And finally, would Lord Auckland and the Admiralty have dined with me on board the St. Vincent, and accompanied me to St. Helens, had they not entertained the highest opinion of my character?

The senior naval officer has always been supposed to be the confidential adviser of the First Lord, and, should he be disposed to go wrong, is supposed to keep him right; but the senior naval Lord, as far as I could understand from him, disavowed having more to say

than any of his colleagues; his position, he said, was not the same as Sir George Cockburn's, or Sir Charles Adam's—his rank and services did not give him the same authority. It is therefore that I appeal to your Lordships.

From what sources Sir Francis Baring could have drawn his opinion of me I am at a loss to know. It could not have been from official letters, for they are all in my favour; nor could it have been from letters I showed him, and extracts of which he may again see. It could not have been from his colleagues, for they could not have told him one thing and me another. It surely could not have been from the scurrilous attacks of a correspondent of a morning paper, who I am sorry has too easy access to the private rooms at the Admiralty; if so, Sir, the reputation of no officer is safe.

I have the honour to be your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

P.S. I also beg to enclose letters of Sir Francis Baring himself expressing his opinion of me, likewise of Lord Melville, the late King, Sir Charles Adam, Sir William Parker, and Lord Minto.

*** *The Admiralty replied to my letter, that it was no part of their duty to enter into the question of why the First Lord should doubt my discretion; adding, that they doubted my judgment and discretion—not only in publishing my letters, but in writing to them, and sending inclosures.*

To John Parker, Esq. Admiralty.

SIR, I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th, informing me, that their Lordships do not consider it their duty to enter into the question, as to the reasons of the First Lord for doubting my discretion.

I should have thought, that when a civilian was placed at the head of the Admiralty, who knew nothing of the service, or the

officers in it, it was the duty, and should be the inclination, of the naval officers, to set the First Lord right, if he formed an erroneous opinion of the character of an officer; but as their Lordships think different, I must submit, and consider Sir Francis Baring has formed his opinion of me, from what he has read in the Morning Herald, which gives me the right of doubting both his justice and his judgment, and leaves the question open between himself and me.

As for their Lordships' opinion that I have shown sufficient proof of want of discretion and judgment, in publishing the letters I have done, I beg to observe, *that* it is quite a different question. *In so doing, I only followed the example of the two senior naval Lords, and a late Secretary of the Admiralty, all of whom published*—one a pamphlet, disapproving of the way in which the Navy was manned, for which he lost his seat at the Admiralty, while the Secretary, who replied to him, kept his; the other a letter to Lord John Russell on the retired list, and an anonymous letter besides. I do not say they showed either want of discretion or judgment, and the Prime Minister did not think so, as he appointed both of them to their present places. Independent of the above reasons, I did think it high time that an effort should be made to put a stop to the wasteful expence and blunders that had gone on for many years, and I do hope my letters will be the means of drawing public attention to what I have set forth, and of correcting the abuses that exist in almost all the departments of the Navy.

Their Lordships have thought proper to mix up with the letters I have published, an official letter which I wrote to them, with enclosures, which they have brought under their general censure. Their Lordships will pardon me for taking that letter entirely separate from the others.

I have been accused of want of discretion by the First Lord of the Admiralty. I have already told their Lordships, had it been in consequence of my letters, I should not have said one word on the subject, and there the matter should have rested; but this Sir Francis Baring did not admit, and, moreover, reasserted his opinion after reading my testimonials. May I ask their Lordships what I was to do? It was impossible to leave the matter where it was; nothing was left for me to do but to appeal to their Lordships, and send my testimonials. Their Lordships accuse me of want of judgment and discretion in so doing. If their Lordships mean

to infer a breach of confidence in my sending extracts of letters regarding my own character—if that is their Lordship's charge, I repel it as strongly as an officer of my rank is justified in repelling an unjust charge.

Had I been brought before a court-martial for an offence, there is not one letter that I would not have been justified in shewing, and they would have all appeared in the public papers.

I am not under trial before a court-martial; but I am under trial before their Lordships; and I conceive myself fully justified in sending my credentials to my masters and judges, where they are, or ought to be, as secure in the archives of the Admiralty, as they are in my own possession.

Their Lordships are perhaps not aware that a circular of the 1st of February 1846, invites officers to send copies of any private letters of such superior officers, or other persons, wherein services are especially referred to, up to the 31st of December 1845. All mine are there up to that date; and I presume what was right in 1845, cannot be wrong in 1849.

I have the honour to remain, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, Jan. 6, 1850.

*** *Receipt of letter acknowledged.*

To the Right Honourable Lord John Russell.

My Lord, Your Lordship is no doubt aware, that I have published several letters to your Lordship on the state of the Navy. The First Lord of the Admiralty addressed a letter to me, disapproving of my having so done, and finished by telling me he had a high opinion of my professional character, but doubted my discretion; which letter I inclosed to your Lordship, together with my reply.

When I saw the Channel Squadron, which I commanded for two years, to the entire satisfaction of the Government, reorganized under my late second in command, I waited on Sir Francis Baring, and stated my surprise at his letter, and handed him testimonials I had received from various members of the Government, expressing

their opinion of my services, expecting to remove the impression from Sir Francis Baring's mind, of my want of discretion, in which your Lordship will see, by the correspondence, I failed.

Feeling it impossible to rest under such a slur, I wrote an official letter to the Admiralty, which I also inclose, together with my reply. For the testimonials alluded to, I beg to refer your Lordship to the Admiralty.

Failing to receive any redress from them, I now appeal to your Lordship, as Prime Minister of this country, whether it is to be borne, that a First Lord of the Admiralty, and, as a civilian, necessarily ignorant of the service over which he presides, and of the character of the officers in it, should inconsiderately express a doubt of the discretion of an officer (without alleging any cause) who has as high testimonials as any officer in the service, and who has performed his duty to his Queen and country zealously and faithfully, both at sea and on shore, in most parts of the globe, and been three times wounded in the service?

I also appeal to your Lordship, whether it is to be borne, when an officer is so treated by the First Lord, and appeals to the Board for redress, he is to be told by that Board, his natural protectors against injustice—"That they do not consider it any part of their duty to "enter into the question, as to the reason of the First Lord of the Admiralty for having expressed a doubt of your discretion;" and moreover, "that they doubt the discretion and judgment of an "officer appealing to them, and sending testimonials of his character "from various members of this and other Governments?" Is this, my Lord, the position that a British Admiral ought to be placed in? To be subject to the hasty judgment of a First Lord—and when he appeals to the Board for protection, to be reproved by them for so doing? and for sending them testimonials of his character—testimonials which, if before a court-martial, he would be fully justified in producing, and still more justified in producing before the colleagues of the First Lord who oppresses him?

I do look upon it as an act of great injustice, that an officer should be reproved for asking for redress and explanation, which reproof will remain on the records of the Admiralty, and infallibly ruin his professional prospects.

I beg your Lordship to distinctly understand, that had Sir Francis Baring's expression been confined to my publishing letters to your

Lordship, I should not have said one word on the subject, as that admits of a doubt, notwithstanding the examples I have quoted in my public and private letters to the Admiralty and Sir Francis Baring.

I have the honour to remain,
Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

12, Rider Street, Jan. 22, 1850.

To Rear Admiral Sir C. Napier.

SIR, I am aware that you have published several letters, addressed to me, on the state of the Navy.

These letters contain gross imputations on the character and motives of the late Lord Auckland and his colleagues in the Government; but I have not taken any notice of these imputations. When, however, you inform me that the First Lord of the Admiralty has disapproved of these letters, and that he has finished by telling you, "He has a high opinion of your professional character, but doubts your discretion," I cannot say less than that I concur in his opinion of your professional character, and share in his doubts of your discretion.

I have not interfered in the disposal of the command of the Channel Squadron. You commanded that squadron, as you say, for nearly two years to the entire satisfaction of the Government. I concurred in that satisfaction; and you may remember that, when you applied to me in 1846 for a seat at the Board of Admiralty, then about to be formed under Lord Auckland, I expressed my opinion that your services would be more useful to the public in a naval than in a civil department.

Your brilliant services in 1840 on the coast of Syria evince the energy and boldness of your professional character, and will always be remembered by me.

I remain, SIR, your obedient servant,
JOHN RUSSELL.

8, Downing Street, January 25, 1850.

To the Right Honourable Lord John Russell.

My Lord, I read your letter with surprise, both at the terms and the nature of the charge, that "my letters contain gross "imputations on the character and motives of the late Lord Auckland, "and his colleagues in the Government."

I never in thought, word, or deed, said, or meant to say, one word against Lord Auckland or his colleagues in the Government; I honoured and loved him too well; and what expression of mine your Lordship has fixed upon to authorize such an accusation I am at a loss to know.

More than once in my letters I disclaimed all personal attacks, and in the last letter I did so in the most explicit terms.

My remarks extended over many years, and therefore could not be aimed at Lord Auckland, whose name was never once mentioned, and who held the office of First Lord little more than two years.

I appealed to your Lordship because Sir Francis Baring refused to explain if his expression was applied to my publishing letters to your Lordship, though I showed him testimonials to convince him of the injustice of such an imputation—to awaken in his mind a sense of the pain he had inflicted on mine.

It is satisfactory to me to find by your Lordship's letter that, although you share in Sir Francis Baring's doubts of my discretion, you confine those doubts to the publication of my letters.

Had I consulted my own interest, I certainly would not have published those letters, for I knew full well they could not be acceptable to men in office; but I had a public duty to perform which I was determined to do at all risks.

I am glad your Lordship was satisfied with my command of the Channel Squadron.

I am not aware that I ever applied to your Lordship for a seat at the Board of Admiralty. I offered my services to you generally.

I am obliged to your Lordship for your remembrance of my services in Syria, but, after what has passed, they are not likely to be again wanted in a hurry.

I remain, your Lordship's obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, Your leading article in the Times of the 5th, drawing the attention of your readers to a letter published in your paper of that day, and written by Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Napier, under the head of "The past and present state of the Navy," sets forth that "any man with the ability and information to tell the public "the real truth about the Navy is sure to be listened to, let him "talk at what length he may." Although I cannot presume to imagine I possess the ability to secure that attention, I nevertheless hope you will favour my shorter letter with a place in your columns. It purports simply to explain some points so stated by Sir C. Napier as might mislead the public, believing, as they are likely to do, that he writes fully from data—that he has placed the question fairly before them, with an impartial knowledge of his subject.

The commencement of his letter relates to the value of the services of the squadron of evolution, which he himself commanded in the channel; but, as I conceive this portion of his letter to be irrelevent of the matter stated by the heading as the subject of his treatise, I may be permitted to pass it over in silence. The centre aims at exposing the total misrule of our Boards of Admiralty (comprising the entire period of England's greatest glory), from the commencement of the last long war to the present day; and to substantiate this argument, he gives the strength of the Navy as published in the Lists of 1815, and its reckless destruction by the different Governments, without replacing the ships so destroyed by others of equal capabilities; and, lastly, the incapacity of Boards of Admiralty resulting from their present composition. The argument of this last portion of the gallant Admiral's letter is too thinly cloaked to carry with it much conviction. Was it not, besides, fully answered by the well-remembered encomiums he himself passed on the naval rule of the late First Lord, who gave him the command of the Channel Squadron? But it may be as well to assure the public that few naval officers of rank, and none of experience, hold with Sir C. Napier in wishing to see one of their own service in the position of First Lord of the Admiralty, an office that does not require the detailed knowledge of a shipwright, or the

practice of a sailor, so much as the calm unprejudiced knowledge, habits, and experience of a statesman. This the gallant Admiral must, in his secret conviction, be well aware of; or, is he prepared to say that our present Navy List can produce an Admiral possessing, or does he believe that he himself possesses, those necessary qualifications? For instance, let him, an officer of undoubted distinction and naval experience, say whether, apart from the practical knowledge of a sailor's duties and Admiral's diplomacy, he believes his habits of life and education have made him the impartial statesman so necessary to fill the office of that important trust? Besides which, the experiment of a naval First Lord has, in every instance, failed upon trial. I much fear, that the very justice and impartiality of the present First Lord has ruffled the gallant Admiral's temper.

On the 1st of January 1815, our Navy List (as Sir Charles has remarked) showed a total of 747 ships of all descriptions, not including ships building, store-ships, receiving-ships, &c.; but a very great portion of those were then worn out—many from the dry-rot, many from long service, without undergoing adequate repair, and many owing to the habit of the day, were shown on the list as seventy-fours, eighties, &c., which had for years been condemned into hulks and convict-ships; and the remainder, with but few exceptions, required repairs. Thus was the Navy shown in 1815—strong in round numbers, but ineffective in reality—requiring a larger outlay to repair or maintain than had been expended upon the dockyards from year to year throughout the war, and thrown upon the hands of the first peace Admiralty and Navy Board, possessing curtailed means, and deafened by the cry of retrenchment. The explanation to this is, that the ships could not be spared from foreign stations to send home for repair, and that the numerous prizes filled the gaps caused by "wear and tear," and other casualties.

Allow me, Sir, in this portion of my letter, to remind you, that much larger sums, in proportion to the results produced, were shown by the French naval Commission of Inquiry of (I think) 1842 or 1843, to have been expended by the naval government of France. I say this simply to show, that it is unfair to condemn simply because the sum is enormous.

But these prizes, although capacious in size and beautiful in form

were generally weaker and worse-constructed ships than our own; and it was found, that to repair them would be to build new ships, with the additional expense of pulling the old ones to pieces. The Canopus, the eighty-four-gun ship—so often cited by Sir Charles—one of the soundest and best, was kept in repair to retain her model, and to satisfy the natural feeling of association some officers had in connection with her. But, what is the result of having done so? —why, that more money has been expended on her than would have built two eighty-fours.

Ships do wear out much faster than is supposed—faster generally in harbour than when in commission, owing to the air not circulating between their timbers so readily: let a shipbuilder's evidence be taken, he will give reasons fully in detail. But our new ships, copper-fastened throughout, at the suggestion of Sir William Symonds, will not require such frequent repair as the old ones, the upper works of which were iron-fastened, and required a septennial outlay of about one-eighth or one-tenth their prime cost.

The disappearance of the prizes and other ships on the Navy Lists of 1815, is easily explained, when it is admitted, that to have made them all efficient, would have cost more than to have built 1100 ships of corresponding rates.

Would it then have been correct to have commenced upon this principle? or even to have spent small sums of money on ships whose frames we knew to be constructed on a defective principle, when at that time Sir Robert Seppings had given his great improvement in the construction of ships to the world—an invention which commenced a new era in the art of ship-building—a system which combined economy, strength, space, and durability? This replacement has been going on gradually, according to the means the Admiralty had at their disposal; but it was more vigorously carried forward after 1821—one new ship, perhaps, replaced two old ones, too rotten to repair; and although the List shows a less numerical force than formerly, it yet more than doubles the fleets of France and Russia. In 1826 the Navy List presented ships, defective perhaps according to our present more critical taste, but superior to those of 1815; and the result of 1849 shows a fleet, from the twelve-gun brig to the 120, superior in every single respect to any that the world has ever known before. As a small proof of the accuracy of my affirmation, witness the alteration of opinion of the

two Admirals (Sir William Parker, and Sir Charles Napier), formerly most prejudiced against Symonds, in relation to Her Majesty's ship Queen, after she had served under their respective commands. The latter now praises her as if he had never abused her; and the former applied for her to be his flag-ship.

The public must not allow themselves to be deceived into believing that their money has been thrown away, and no result arrived at in the art of ship-building, merely because there exists a rivalry between great ship-builders, and a difference of opinion between naval officers, as to the relative merits of the improved ships.

Of the Steam Navy I say little, because, in the first place, I think we have been too precipitate in patronizing every invention; and, secondly, because it is a subject yet under consideration. But I do not hesitate to assert, that, taking it in a mass, no foreign Government, or Governments' Steam Navies combined, can compare with it (let the late Admiralty bear the sin of extravagance and precipitancy, in ordering the building of the iron steamers and untried screws, for on their shoulders it rests); and we possess many steamers that even those of the famed North American line would be sorry to compete with, if carrying the top weight necessary to a war steamer. I speak from experience.

It is just to the present Admiralty, to inform the public that they have fallen into none of the mistakes or extravagancies of the last, and have done much to produce what the country will, in the event of a war, see can effect good service.

I have not taken the gallant Admiral's letter in detail, because, in several instances, he contradicts himself. He recommends cutting down the old seventy-fours into frigates, while he shows, that in doing so to the Dublin, she cost more than would have been expended on the construction of a new fifty-gun frigate and corvette besides. Other instances I could cite: and, again, in another part of his letter, he speaks of the value of having seventy-fours for the North Sea and Baltic.

I will end by assuring the public (with some opportunities of judging), that the Board of Admiralty is as anxious to curtail the expenses of the dockyards as the rest of Her Majesty's subjects who pay taxes can be; and, moreover (with the able assistance of the present admirable Surveyor of the Navy, Sir B. Walker), have already laid down a system which must work most beneficially.

Great dockyard expenses were incurred in repairing ships between the periods of their commission; there was not a sufficiently-clear understanding kept up between what the Admiralty had approved of as alterations when in commission, and what was the established warrant at Somerset House, so consequently everything was repaired as before, after the ships were paid off and placed in the hands of the dockyard. The present Admiralty has rectified this want of arrangement; and you may rely upon it, that although Sir Charles Napier can find fault with a Board of Admiralty, he would not add to the economy of the service by being a member of one, nor would he impart to it more zeal or anxiety to promote the best interests of the service, than is felt by the members of the present Board.

This I conceive to be the case, and I write with the impartiality of one unconnected with Government.

I have the honour to be, SIR,
Your obedient servant,
JUSTICE.

December 10, 1849.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, "Justice" writes like a gentleman, though anonymously, and I will reply to him.

He seems to doubt the veracity of my statements; I will examine his contradictions:—

He says I gave the strength of the Navy in 1815, and its reckless destruction by different Governments, without replacing the ships so destroyed by others of equal capabilities. Surely "Justice" cannot have read my letter, or, if he has read it, he has not done so with attention; for, after enumerating the ships that have disappeared, I gave an account of what we had built.

In the 747 ships of last war I did not include those building, store-ships, receiving-ships, convict-ships, &c. This "Justice" quotes, and immediately after says, "A great portion of those were worn out, many from dry rot, many from long service without undergoing adequate repair, and many owing to the habit of the day,

were shown as seventy-fours and eightys which had been condemned into hulks and convict ships, and the remainder, with few exceptions, required repair." "Justice" forgets that I gave the receiving-ships, convict-ships, &c., besides those for service.

I am well aware that many of the 747 required repair from long service, and in those days we rarely heard of the dry rot; but I was not aware till "Justice" told me, that the Navy in 1815, was strong in round numbers but inefficient in reality. Does "Justice" really mean to say that the fine fleets we had in the Mediterranean and elsewere were inefficient? If such was the case, what would have become of us had the war lasted? What would have become of us had we met with a disaster? If such was the case, "Justice" passes a much more severe censure on the Admiralty of the day than I have ventured to do. He gives up all the prizes at once, except the Canopus, the only sound and good ship we had, and preserves her for her model, and to satisfy the natural feeling of association of some officers. Was it the only ship to satisfy those feelings? Is "Justice" cognizant that we built nine ships after her? and what then was the use of preserving the model? The fact is, she was frequently doomed to destruction, as many others were, without sufficient reason, and was saved by Sir George Cockburn. It is quite true that ships wear out in harbour as well as at sea, but not for the reason given by "Justice," viz. "That the air does not circulate so readily through the timbers." He may tell that, as the old saying is, "to the marines." The ship-builders will not believe him. Ships at sea are always full, and cannot be properly ventilated. Ships in harbour are always empty, and are ventilated throughout. The cause of decay is letting the dry-rot get a-head, instead of repairing ships the moment it appears. This was allowed in many cases, in order to get rid of particular classes, to build others according to the caprice of different Admiralties and different Surveyors. Who ever saw a Surveyor take the same care of other builders' ships that he does of his own? Who ever saw a Surveyor in love with a ship built by a foreigner? Who ever saw a Surveyor permit another man to build a ship if he could help it? Who ever resisted the late Surveyor building ships with more pertinacity than Sir Robert Seppings and the Navy Board of the day? Jealousy and caprice were the powerful causes of the disappearance of so many ships.

If ships were known to wear out faster in harbour than at sea, why did we not build slips instead of ships, and keep them, as the French do, on the stocks till wanted?

They build ships to last; we build ships to rot. Here again "Justice" passes a severer censure on different Admiralties than I have done, as it is only now that we have decided not to launch ships till wanted.

In 1826, the Navy List, says "Justice," presented ships superior to 1815, but still defective; they are therefore got rid of, and 1849 shows a fleet of from 12 guns to 120, superior to what the world has ever known. But why did we go through such an ordeal to arrive at this? We had the Caledonia as a model for three-deckers, and the Canopus for two-decked ships. Why then did we build three-decked ships, that would not stand up? "Justice" seems angry that I praised the Queen, having before abused her; but if "Justice" had been just, he would have added, that Admiral Bowles found the Queen steered so ill, that he gave up his cruise, and sent her into port. She subsequently went through considerable alteration, and proved herself a good ship, and as such I reported her.

I have said we had the Canopus for a model; why then did we build "the forty thieves?" Why did we build 44's and 50's on two decks? Why did we build the fir 32's, the "donkeys," and the useless corvettes? Why did we build the gun-brigs, and the "coffins," the 10-gun brigs? Why did we build forty-five 46-gun frigates after the peace, which we knew could not contend with the American frigates, and even had enough to do latterly to take the French frigates? and why have we got rid of almost all of them to be replaced by 26-gun ships, superior to the "donkeys," but inferior to the 46's?"

"Justice" does not take me in detail, because I contradict myself, and recommend the small 74's to be cut down, though the Dublin cost £50,000 more than would have built a frigate and corvette. Here is another attack on the Admiralty by "Justice." Why did they expend £50,000 on the Dublin? Why did they not examine beforehand what she would cost? Will "Justice" tell us whether the other eleven or twelve cost as much? I suggested taking off the poops of the old 74's, and their upper deck guns, and using them up as frigates, in place of letting them go to decay, and building frigates of sixty guns. Where is the contradiction in this? and

where is the contradiction in saying we required some small 74's for the Baltic and North Seas? "Justice," I suppose, was not born in those days.

"Justice" says, that our fleets more than double those of France and Russia. They do no such thing.

France and Russia combined have a larger fleet than we have. The Russian fleets in the Baltic and Black Seas are always manned, and consist of between forty and fifty sail of the line. The French have in the water twenty-five sail of the line, and on the stocks twenty-five; we have in the water sixty-three, and on the stocks about twenty; and if a coalition should unfortunately take place between France and Russia, our fleet must be immediately increased to at least one hundred sail of the line; and should we unfortunately quarrel with any great power, the probability is, we shall have others on our backs.

Of the steam Navy, "Justice" says little, "because we have been too precipitate in patronizing every invention;" and, secondly, because it is "under consideration." Under consideration indeed! Will "Justice" tell the country how many millions our "consideration" has cost? I agree with him that the late Admiralty must bear the sin of building the iron steamers, and I hope the House of Commons will call for the bill. The present Admiralty have done the best they can with them, and they are blundering on themselves, to leave a legacy to their successors, of which, more by-and-by.

"Justice" pays a poor compliment to our Admirals, when he thinks not one of them is fit to be at the head of his own profession; they cannot be the impartial statesmen, so necessary to fill an office of such trust.

Why, Sir, we don't want a statesman. We want a man who can see with his own eyes, and hear with his own ears—a man who, when appealed to, can judge for himself, instead of turning to his Secretary, or one of his colleagues. Why is the country to pay £4,500 a-year to a man who must be in leading-strings? A portion of that had better be given to the dry-nurse. The experiment of a Naval First Lord, says "Justice," has in every instance failed: that I deny. Lord St. Vincent was no failure; he began reform in the dockyards, and, had he remained in office, he would have saved

millions to the country; he was a reformer, and unpopular, as all reformers are.

Lord Barham's administration was no failure. He collected the fleet to send to Nelson, which destroyed the fleets of France and Spain; and the remnant of the Brest fleet, which they sent afterwards to the West Indies, by his judicious distribution of our squadron, he managed to destroy.

"Justice" finishes, by telling us that the Board of Admiralty are anxious to contract the expenses of the dockyards, and with the able assistance of the Surveyor, the system must work beneficially. I am glad to hear it. If they will let the Surveyor alone, and give him ample powers, there will be no more mistakes; there will be no want of a clear understanding between the Admiralty and Somerset House, which "Justice" tells us there has been; but there will be no union, or good understanding amongst themselves, till the composition of the Board is changed. How that change should be made, I have already given my opinion, and I will not be led into it again. Sooner or later a change must take place; the country will not stand it much longer; and the more it is brought under their notice by your powerful journal, the sooner will the evils be remedied.

I shall now take leave of "Justice," and only remark, that in the opinions I have given, I mean nothing personal to any Board, or any individual of any Board, whether naval or civilian. The attempts that have been made by writers to fix personality on me, I shall treat with the contempt they deserve.

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir, The Government have taken a step in the right direction, by putting the steam department under the orders of the Surveyor of the Navy, and I feel satisfied if he is let alone and made responsible, the blundering about steamers now in progress will be the last.

After the Sidon and Odin were tried, the Admiralty decided to make the Leopard an improved Odin. I urged their Lordships to

make an improved Sidon in vain; she will in consequence carry little fuel, and two guns less than the Sidon, their Lordships, in their wisdom, having, though a larger ship, pierced her for four guns less than the Odin on the main deck, though it was proved that the latter could carry all her main deck guns—but certainly, too near the water.

The Leopard having less depth of hold than the Sidon, her shaft is carried close up to the main deck with five-and-a-half feet under the paddle-beams. Her want of depth will give her little stowage for coal, and bring her main deck ports too low; but, nevertheless, if properly fitted, she will not be a bad ship, and will have a clear main deck. When the construction of the Leopard was suspended, their Lordships *forgot* to suspend the construction of the engines, and to meet the increased depth of hold they raised the sleepers on which the engines rest, using more timber than necessary, exposing the engines, and also diminishing the ship's stability. Had the connecting rods and pillars been lengthened, it would not have cost much more money, and things would then have been in their proper places. The Leopard ought to have been finished as fast as possible, and blunders of more consequence would have been prevented, and their Lordships would have had their choice of three steam frigates to have improved upon; but by some unfortunate fatality, they suspended or progressed slowly with the construction of the Leopard, and struck into a new experiment, which will prove very little better than the former ones; and not satisfied with one vessel, they laid down no less than four. The first of them is finished; and they must have been laid down with very little consideration, for at the very time they were increasing the dimensions of the Leopard, in consequence of the reports of the Odin, they were decreasing the dimensions of the new experiment from 60 to 100 tons, to carry only four guns on the main deck, and by placing the officers' cabins on the gun-deck, falling into the same error they did before with the miscalled frigates. One of this new class, the Magicienne, is finished, and they are about to remove the officers' cabins below, and when finished, they will find her stowage cut up, and that she is too large for a corvette, and too small for a frigate. What number of guns she is now to carry is not decided upon; but if the number is increased, they will have to alter the magazines, shot-lockers, and shell rooms, besides all the store rooms, to make way for the officers'

cabins: she has been built without bulwarks, which seems to have been forgotton, though we have been altering for some time past all the old steamers as fast as they required repairs; the rudder and tiller, unlike the Odin, come through the captain's cabin, which blocks up the midship port, and instead of firing six guns right aft she will only fire four. She has 400-horse engines, which I am told are equal to the 560 of the Sidon and Odin, and had the boilers and engines been properly placed she might have had a clear main deck instead of it being blocked up by coal boxes, which reach from the top of the boiler close up to the upper deck, and, if I mistake not, she will find the same inconvenience of top weight the Retribution did, whose engines of 800-horse power are now being replaced with Penn's 400-horse power. At what height the Magicienne is to carry her main deck ports, depends of course on the quantity of coals she stows and on her armament; but do with her what they please, she will be an inefficient frigate and uselessly large for a corvette.

Had reports been attended to—had our best steam officers been consulted, we might have had four fine frigates for nearly the same money; and if Penn's engines are really of the power they say, they would have carried fuel enough for six weeks. The other three new vessels are of still smaller dimensions; they are pierced for more guns, and the officers' cabins are below, but the position of engine and boilers will be the same. They will also have a blocked up main deck, and be still more deficient of stowage than the Magicienne.

However, I hope this will be the last blunder, and I repeat if the Surveyor is let alone, it will be so; he will take care, if more steamers are to be built, to bring the constructor of the engines and of the vessels together in his presence, which has never yet been done—not even in the case of the Leopard, though her construction has been altered since she was taken in hand; and I have no doubt, now the size and plan of the Sidon's boilers have been proved defective, he will take care that the Leopard's are well examined before they are received. Having taken one step in the right direction, it is to be lamented the Government did not go on. The vacancy at the Admiralty, caused by the improper appointment of Lord John Hay to Plymouth, gave them an opportunity of reducing a Lord of the Admiralty, and appointing a Controller of the Medical and

Victualling Departments, without a seat at the Board, charging him with the sole management and responsibility of these departments, the Admiralty corresponding with him personally, or by letter.

Another Lord might have been reduced, and appointed Deputy-Surveyor, under Sir Baldwin Walker, and the whole Store department committed to his care—quite enough for any one man to attend to. These appointments should be limited to a number of years, removeable by the Admiralty; but neither the Surveyor, or Deputy-Surveyor, or Controller of the Medical or Victualling Department, should go out with the Ministry. When an opportunity offered, a situation should be given to the lay Lord. The Admiralty would then be reduced to three. I think, some time ago, before a committee of the House of Commons, Sir George Cockburn gave it as his opinion, the Navy should be governed by one or three. It is not likely any Minister will consent to one, but he may consent to three; and if all our Admirals are considered too thick-headed to be the First, let the Minister put a civilian there, with a salary of £4,500 a-year (for knowing nothing, if the country will stand it), with two naval men to instruct him. Let there be no longer public and private Boards; let all three know what each other are about, which they certainly do not do at the present. Leave the officers I have named to be reponsible for their own departments, and let the Admiralty give up details and superintend the whole; and, above all, get the establishments under one roof, and put an end to the running about from the Admiralty at Whitehall to the Admiralty at Somerset House, and *vice versâ*. Things will go on much better, and the Admiralty will regain the respect of the public and the Navy, which they certainly do not now enjoy.

There can be no use for such a numerous Board as now exists, when it is well known they are never consulted—when, indeed, every pains is taken by the senior Naval Lord to keep the others in ignorance of what is going on, thereby causing jealousy and jarring, which has always existed, and which, I have reason to believe, exists now to a very considerable extent. The desire of patronage can be the only obstacle I know of to the arrangement I propose; and that desire is so great, that though there is an Admiral, a Rear-Admiral, and three or four Captains, at Greenwich Hospital, they are not entrusted with the power of surveying a man for a pension, or for admittance into the Hospital. The time of the junior Naval Lord,

assisted by a Surgeon, is taken up for that purpose. I would relieve the Admiralty from that duty, and let it be done at Greenwich, which will be more convenient for the poor sailor, who is only now examined once a fortnight, and is kept in a lodging till the day arrives*. By such an arrangement the expense of lodging the sailor and keeping a Surgeon will be got rid of, and the work just as well done.

Why do the Admiralty keep this in their own hands? They surely cannot be afraid that the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor would job the seamen's pensions and their entries into the hospital; but it creates a suspicion that the Admiralty do so themselves.

I remain, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

March 7, 1850.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir, The late Board of Admiralty built an iron fleet, without ascertaining that iron was a fit material for ships of war. The present Board of Admiralty are getting rid of them, without ascertaining that iron is not a fit material for ships of war.

Before they sold the Grappler, why did they not allow the Excellent to fire a few shots at her, and set the question at rest. Not having done so, I should recommend them to fire a shot or two through the Simoom, and invite the late Board to be present. They might also let the water into the foremost compartment, and ascertain whether a ship going down by the head is likely to live in a heavy sea.

I remain, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, May 20, 1850.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir, I observe the Admiralty, by the hint I gave them in your influential journal, have tried shot on a butt made of iron of the same thickness as the Simoom's sides. The results were rather

* He is kept at Rockingham House.

curious. The splinters from the iron were most destructive, and the holes so large that they could not be plugged up in action. But the most extraordinary thing is that nearly every shot split into fragments: this will save our enemies the expense of firing shells. A canvass screen was stretched across between the two sections of the butt, which was riddled like a sieve, although some of the pieces of the shot were not bigger than one's nail. It is a pity the late Board had not been present to witness the result of their handiwork. This experiment will set the question at rest; and I do hope Mr. Hume, or some influential member, will move for the whole expense of this iron fleet, including their fittings. It will not be far short of a million. If this affair, in addition to the statements I have before made of the incompetence and extravagance of Boards of Admiralty, as they are constituted, does not open John Bull's eye, nothing will. Had the Navy been ruled by a professional man, and had he committed such a folly, he would most justly have been impeached, and turned out of the service with disgrace. But the Board will escape all punishment, and every one of them will deny having anything to do with it. I warned them in the House of Commons before it was too late, and was only laughed at.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

P. S. On further enquiry, I find, that shortly after the present Board came into office, experiments were tried on the Ruby, which the Admiralty considered conclusive; but some doubts having been started, another trial was made, which set the question at rest.

THE IRON STEAM FLEET.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, I see Mr. Wawn has moved for returns relative to the construction of the Iron Fleet.

I do trust, those returns will be given, and that when laid on the table of the House of Commons, you will use your powerful pen to expose and bring to punishment the author of this shame-

ful transaction. It is almost incredible that six gentlemen, Lords of the Admiralty, and two Secretaries, could sit round a table and deliberately decide on building this fleet without a single trial. I warned them at the time, but ineffectually. What are Mr. Hume, Mr. Cobden, and the Economists about? This is not a trifling affair of cutting down a few thousands; I suspect it will turn out a good round sum of nearly a million. The present Admiralty found the contract made when they came into office, and the vessels well advanced, and they did their best to make them useful. They found they could not carry their weights, and, with the exception of the Greenock, and I think the Birkenhead, they substituted smaller engines than were intended.

I only blame them for not making their experiments the moment they came into office, and probably they might have sold them to the mercantile marine. As ships of war, they are useless; as troop-ships we have no employment for them; and they must lie and rust in our harbours, unless they can be employed to carry out Mr. Sidney Herbert's needlewomen.

I am, SIR, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, July 13, 1850.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, Public opinion has reformed the Office of Woods and Forests, and I feel quite certain public opinion will reform the Board of Admiralty.

I do not believe there is a man in the whole concern, except the first Lord himself, who thinks the system either works well or economically; it is without question, the worst managed and most expensive administration under the Crown. How can two establishments, one at Somerset House, and another at Whitehall, work well? It was only the other day, between them, they sold a ship that the Excellent had been practising upon, for a trifle, and they forgot there were 300 tons of iron ballast in her, which the man who bought her put into his pocket—a pretty windfall for him. Who was responsible for that? and how is it expended?

When the Navy and Victualling Boards were abolished, it was the intention to have placed the whole establishment under one

roof; but the ladies were unwilling to give up their houses, and they carried the day, and I believe sent my old friend, Admiral George Dundas, who proposed it, to Coventry. I have already shown the number of voyages a letter must make between Whitehall and Somerset House before it arrives at its final destination; and I tell you further, Sir, if the Act of Parliament which regulates the Admiralty business was put in force, the service could not be carried on at all; and I think I will show you that the instructions given by the Admiralty to the principal officers are illegal.

Sir James Graham's Act directs that the duties that were performed by the Navy Victualling Board, &c. shall be performed by the Admiralty. Hence it follows, that all letters and orders should be signed by two Lords of the Admiralty, or by their Secretary; and yet their Lordships disregarding the Act of Parliament, which requires the signatures of two Lords or their Secretary, direct that all orders given by individual Lords are to be considered equally valid as if signed by their Lordships. They further direct, that all letters should be addressed to the Secretary of the Admiralty, with the departments to which they belong marked in the corner. From the Admiralty they are to be sent to Somerset House in a box, to be acted upon or returned to Whitehall, and five messengers (that is one for each department) are to be kept for the purpose.

The Surveyor of the Navy is permitted to ask from the officers of the yards, information in explanation, but he is not to give any order of a general nature, or to enter into correspondence with the Superintendents, the Admiralty are to do that themselves; but he is to make known his wishes in writing to the superintending Lord, who is to submit them to the Board. Hence it follows, that the Surveyor of the Navy—one of the most important officers under the Crown—may be kept in entire ignorance of what passes between the Admiralty and the Superintendents of the different dockyards, and the Admiralty and the Superintendents may be kept in ignorance of what passes between the Surveyor and the Dockyard Officers; he is, however, to consult and advise with the Lord of the Admiralty who superintends his duties, to do which, either he must run to Whitehall, or the Superintending Lord must run to Somerset House; but as I believe the Surveyor has business to do with all the six Lords, he

is kept pretty well on the trot when he would be much better employed in his own office, could he get rid of the Superintending Lord, who when a change of Ministers takes place, is a fresh hand, and most probably knows nothing at all about the duties he is ordered to superintend.

The Superintendent Lord, in the Accountant General's Department, has more to do, and never ought to be absent from Somerset House, and that was Sir James Graham's intention; no accounts could be passed without his signature. But the Superintendent Lord, in the last administration, found it very troublesome to sign his name so often; and a subsequent Act of Parliament was passed, and a Deputy Accountant General appointed for that purpose, so that the junior Lord might receive his salary for running about the dockyards, and doing a great deal of mischief. He likewise is moved with the Ministry, and a new man, probably without any experience, is put over the Accountant General, who is not permitted to enter into any correspondence with his own Department; he may ask information or explanation; the Admiralty reserve the correspondence for themselves. The Controller of the Victualling and the Director General of the Medical Department, both most efficient men, have likewise their Superintending Lord; and it is quite evident to any person who reads the instructions, that if the Superintending Lords did their duty, they ought to be at Somerset House every day of their lives. This is not the case, and the greater part of the correspondence has fallen into the hands of the principal officers, who are perfectly capable of carrying on the duties of their departments without the assistance of a Superintending Lord. The Surveyor's department is in good hands; he ought to have a deputy, and the Storekeeper-General should be under him. The Surveyor or his deputy ought to make frequent visits to the different ports: I do not mean such pleasurable excursions as the Board of Admiralty generally take, running through the establishments with railroad speed, *the First Lord always having a naval officer at his elbow to tell him the difference between a line-of-battle ship and a frigate.* The dockyard departments should be entirely under his control: there ought to be no direct correspondence between the Admiralty and the dockyard authorities whatever. If the Admiralty have not confidence in their Surveyor, let them turn him away and get another; but

whoever he is, let him be a responsible officer, and the work will be both better and cheaper done. Let their Lordships consult the public good, and give up the small patronage in the dockyards to the Superintendents: they should enter the artificers and labourers as a Captain does his crew; he would always search out the best workmen, and if he jobs let him be punished on the spot. Abolish entirely the apprentice system; they only learn bad and idle habits, and much better men can be procured elsewhere. Put under the Superintendent an active Captain, who should be constantly about the yard: his presence would economise thousands.

Over the Victualling Department there is a Comptroller, and over the Medical Department there is a Director General. There is no necessity whatever that I can see to have a naval officer over them; but as there are naval officers at the outports, they would not like to be under the orders of civilians; therefore it might be advisable for the present to put them both under the control of a naval officer, and all correspondence with the Victualling and Hospital Departments and the Admiralty should pass through his hands, and he should be the responsible officer, and his visits to the outports ought to be frequent. The Accountant-General should be at the head of his own department, and be entirely responsible, and carry on all correspondence with those he has business with; his salary ought certainly not to be reduced. It is a most important office, and is filled by a man of first-rate abilities: he can have no occasion for a superintending Lord, who, when he comes into office, has everything to learn about the affairs he is expected to superintend. The above arrangements would reduce the Admiralty to three, and the duty would be much better performed by them, than by six men working in different rooms, not knowing what each other are about, and not even responsible for the department he superintends.

I should propose one Lord for the Admiralty, but the public mind is not yet prepared for such a change. The salary of the First Lord is £4500 a-year; that is ample for the three, giving the First Lord £2500, the others £1000 each; and I see no reason why the First Secretary's salary should not be reduced to £1500, and the salary of the second Secretary brought back to £1000 a-year: his place is permanent, and I cannot understand why he is better paid than his masters. This arrangement, coupled

with putting the whole under one roof, would go a great way in reducing the Admiralty from £137,000 to £100,000, quite sufficient for the management of the Navy in time of peace. The affair of salaries and reductions has been referred to a Committee, and we must wait patiently till we see how it reports; but I hope the independent men of the House will watch well their proceedings.

I fear, Sir, this letter will be considered by the First Lord and the Board, and also by the Prime Minister, another "indiscretion;" but, Sir, if it produce as much good as I have reason to believe my former letters have done, I shall be amply repaid.

I am, SIR,
Your obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

August 1, 1850.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, The Committee on Salaries have taken the Admiralty in hand, but they have begun at the wrong end. The great officers of State, they say, ought to be men of high talent and great experience, and their salaries ought not to be reduced. Granted. But the country has a right to expect they *should* be men of high talent and great experience. I will not dispute the high talent of any of the men who have been put at the head of the Admiralty, but I dispute their great experience. What experience can a man have for the place of First Lord of the Admiralty who knows nothing about the naval service, and who has not even served in an inferior capacity in the Admiralty? No one doubts the high talent of Lord John Russell; but can any man say he has had great experience of naval matters, and is fit to rule the Navy? Yet if he took that place he would step into £4,500 a year.

The two junior Lords have no houses, and their allowance for houses is suppressed, and two of the Lords who have houses are to be deprived of them. Had the committee recommended that three of them, including the First Lord, should be dispensed with altogether, and their houses turned into public offices, the service would be much better carried on. The Admiralty at Somerset House

could then be removed to Whitehall, and there would be no occasion for Superintending Lords running backwards and forwards; and if the principal officers were made responsible for their own duties, and more power given to Admirals, to Superintendents of dockyards and Medical and Victualling departments, half the staff at the Admiralty might be got rid of, and the duty better performed. Had the committee examined those officers, they would have told them that half their duties were done in London, and badly done, and chiefly to keep a little dirty patronage in their hands.

The country is not aware that there are two Admiralties, one at Somerset House and another at Whitehall, costing £137,100 a year. The salaries of the Lords and the principal officers, including the Secretaries, amount to the enormous sum of £19,100 a year, from which the Committee on Salaries have deducted £400 a year.

This absurdity cannot last. In my last letter I warned their Lordships to prepare to quit. The committee have begun, and I hope it is only a beginning. The two vacant houses will make room for the Surveyor and Store-keeper department, which is a great point gained, and I do not despair of seeing the whole establishment follow.

I remain, your obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, August 19, 1850.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir, After the Tory Administration had made promotions in peace by wholesale before they quitted office, they left a legacy to their successors in the shape of the following minute:—

"Their Lordships having taken into their consideration the state of the half-pay list, and being desirous of operating its gradual reduction in time of peace:

"Resolved—that from this date no promotion (except for special brilliant service) shall be made in any rank of commissioned officers (save flag officers), except in the proportion of one promotion for every three vacancies which may be made by the removal by death,

dismissal, or other causes, of officers from the effective lists of each rank kept at this office; death or court-martial vacancies liable to be filled up by Commanders-in-chief abroad not being reckoned."

What, Sir, is the true meaning of this minute? Simply that the vacancies of one in three are the sole patronage of the First Lord, and that if an officer distinguishes himself, he must be promoted by the board. Practically we all knew, before this minute was issued, that the First Lord promoted whom he pleased, though occasionally an officer, for long and distinguished services, slipped in; but this minute is an open avowal of the fact, and when I mentioned it in the House, I was answered by the senior naval Lord, "And little enough too."

Now, Sir, I hold that the promotions in the Navy are meant for the public good, and not for the private and political friends of the First Lord.

I am not simple enough to suppose that, in a Government like ours, interest will not be attended to; but that ought to be the exception, not the rule; and I shall here quote a passage from Allison, which is well worth the attention of the present as well as all other Governments:—

"The aristocracy have, in every period, been deeply implicated in the causes which unhappily so often impair the efficiency of our Naval and Military establishments. Incessant are the efforts which all the holders of Parliamentary influence make during the tranquillity of peace, to get their connexions and dependants elevated to situations which they are frequently incompetent to fill. During the danger and excitement of war, Governments are compelled by necessity to select the most worthy to discharge momentous and perilous duties, and are enabled by the magnitude of their patronage to do so without alienating their Parliamentary supporters. But under the limited establishments, and with the comparatively unimportant duties of peace, this is impossible. Reductions on all sides then compel a rigid attention to influence in the disposal of situations, while the slumber of pacific life affords a prospect of the incapacity of the persons promoted not being discovered, or not becoming productive of public disaster. During the latter years of a long peace influential imbecility is daily, in the Army and Navy, mounting men exclusively to the head of affairs; and when hostilities break out, a large proportion of the officers in high command are

generally found to be wholly unfit for the duties devolving on them. Thus while democratic clamour starves down the establishment to a ruinously low standard in point of amount, aristocratic cupidity paralyzes the direction and nullifies the exertions of that part which is allowed to exist. The disasters at the commencement of the war of 1739, during the first three years of the war of 1756, during the whole of the American contest, during the first four years of the Revolutionary contest, and in the dreadful campaign of Affghanistan in 1840, may all be traced to the combined operation of these causes."

I shall now examine how the minute was attended to by the gentlemen to whom the legacy was left, and how far those who left that legacy complied with it when they returned to office.

On the 27th of February, 1830, the date of the minute, there were on the list of the Navy, according to a return furnished to the House of Commons—Captains, 858; Commanders, 918; Lieutenants, 3,550. In the beginning of November, 1830, when they went out of office, there were—

	REMOVALS.	PROMOTIONS.
Captains	64	20
Commanders	40	32
Lieutenants	240	39

A flag promotion caused the removal of so many Captains and Commanders, and 176 Lieutenants retired with the rank of Commander, but no additional pay; so, in point of fact, there were only 64 Lieutenants removed. To the end of 1834, when Sir James Graham and Lord Auckland were at the head of the Navy, there were—

	REMOVALS.	PROMOTIONS.
Captains	92	50
Commanders	132	74
Lieutenants	421	174

What number were promoted by Admirals abroad, and for special services, I have no means of ascertaining; but if the Admiralty abided by the minute, it must have been considerable.

In the latter end of 1834 Lord de Grey came into office. He had hardly time to look about him, when he was succeeded by Lord Auckland, and he again by Lord Minto. Three First Lords within a year! Napoleon said one bad General was better than two good

ones. I may say, with him, one bad First Lord is better than three good; but the great Whig and Tory families who rule this country are of a different opinion. In 1835, there were—

	REMOVALS.	PROMOTIONS.
Captains	25 ..	12
Commanders	42 ..	17
Lieutenants	74 ..	32

From 1836 until September 1841, when the Tories returned to office, there were—

	REMOVALS.	PROMOTIONS.
Captains	187 ..	138
Commanders	262 ..	229
Lieutenants	717 ..	417

The promotions, it will be seen, very much exceed one in three. Syria and China were the excuse for this; but, in war, no such promotions took place, even for general actions.

According to a return furnished by the Admiralty, the promotions in war time were as follows:—

For the Battle of the 1st of June, thirty-three Lieutenants were made commanders.

For the Battle of St. Vincent, sixteen Lieutenants were made commanders.

For Camperdown, fourteen Lieutenants to Commanders.

Nile, one Commander to Captain, thirteen Lieutenants to Commanders.

Trafalgar, five Commanders were made Captains; twenty-eight Lieutenants, Commanders; twenty-seven Midshipmen, Lieutenants.

St. Domingo, one Commander, seven Lieutenants, eight Midshipmen.

And at the peace promotion sixty-eight Commanders, 133 Lieutenants, and 861 Midshipmen were promoted.

When the Tories came into office in 1841, they found on the Navy List—Captains, 701; Commanders, 772; Lieutenants, 2,718. They finished the year 1841 with a sweeping promotion, making forty Admirals, fifty-three Captains, ninety-three Commanders, and 123 Lieutenants.

Syria and China again got the credit of this promotion, though I do not believe a fourth part of those promoted were on either sta-

tion; and, if they had all been there, such a promotion was quite uncalled for.

When they went out of office they left on the list—Captains, 728; Commanders, 853; Lieutenants, 2,530; being an increase of twenty-seven Captains and eighty-one Commanders, and a decrease of 188 lieutenants; so that the very men who made the minute in 1830, before they went out of office, paid no attention to it in the higher ranks when they came back. So much for ruling the Navy by a political Admiralty.

After agitating the question of a retired list until the session of 1846, the late Sir Robert Peel consented to grant one to old Captains. The first plan was fortunately given up, as there was no restriction to length of service, and a much better was proposed, viz. to allow Captains of sixty years of age, and within 100 of the top of the list, to retire with the rank and pay of Rear-Admirals; but the new board brought forward a plan of their own, not nearly so good, and allowed men of fifty to retire on £1 a day and 18s, and to take their rank as Admirals when those of the same standing who remained on the active list became Admirals; and when the retired Admirals are reduced to twenty-five, they are to have an addition of pay, as a reward for having given up 14s 6d, to receive £1 and 18s. Nothing could have been so absurd; there is now no encouragement for an old man, near the top of the active list, to retire. He must, I presume, come in at the bottom of the list of retired Captains.

The retired list was accompanied by a promotion of twenty Captains to Admirals—quite unnecessary; and the flag-list was limited to one hundred and fifty; fifty-three Captains were made retired Admirals, to be reduced to twenty-five; and one hundred and twenty-seven Captains retired on £1 and 18s a day, agreeably to their standing, and they are to be reduced to one hundred. Had they even stopped here, it would have been well; but they made forty-eight Captains, eighty-five Commanders, and twenty Lieutenants; a promotion certainly not contemplated by Parliament, when £30,000 a-year was granted for a retired list.

From 1847 to the end of 1848, there were—

	REMOVALS.	PROMOTIONS.
Captains	76	.. 30
Commanders	110	.. 73
Lieutenants	285	.. 112

In 1849, there were—

	REMOVALS.		PROMOTIONS.
Captains	20	..	12
Commanders.....	36	..	33
Lieutenants	107	..	45

It will be seen that the Whigs have not attended to the minute, or rather, when they exceeded it, they called it a special promotion; but we all know how easy it is to get up special promotions. If I am not misinformed, a special promotion was once got up for a Secretary's son of no great service.

I do not wish to be parsimonious of promotion, for, when well bestowed, it is the mainspring of action; but when ill bestowed, it is the very reverse. To prevent abuse for the future, I should recommend one promotion for two removals; that should cover every thing; and if the First Lord had any conscience at all, he would divide those promotions between men who really deserve them, and his political friends; no one would complain of that; but when promotion is improperly given, as it generally is, it causes great disgust in the service, and brings forward men who are little deserving of it.

Sir Francis Baring has shown tolerable *discretion* in the first year of his administration, and only promoted twelve Captains, against twenty removals; thirty-two Commanders, against thirty-six removals; and forty-five Lieutenants, against 107. I wish I could say he had been equally *discreet* in his appointments.

When the minute was made, there were, as I have before stated, 858 Captains, 918 Commanders, and 3550 Lieutenants: at the end of 1849 there remain 515 Captains, 848 Commanders, and 2221 Lieutenants; being a reduction in twenty years of 343 Captains, 70 Commanders, and 1329 Lieutenants; but if we deduct 200 who were withdrawn at an expense of £30,000 from the Captains' List, there has only been a reduction of 143. It is now proposed to keep up the Captains to 500, which is quite absurd; they ought to be reduced to half that number, and all the Commanders and Lieutenants, unfit for service, should be placed on a Retired List, and the promotion of one to two be confined to the removals from the Active List. Officers would then have a chance of being employed, and of keeping up the knowledge of their profession, whereas, according to the present system, it does not come to an officer's turn in much less than twenty years in the upper ranks; and this is our state

when other nations are doing all they can to give experience to their officers.

In the French service, officers of a certain age are obliged to retire, and those fit for service are almost constantly employed. If this system is persevered in at the beginning of a war, we shall find our officers without experience opposed to officers who have been in constant practice; and it is not difficult to foresee the result.

In the Navy estimates for 1850-51 the wages to seamen and marines were £1,322,959; the half-pay and pensions, civil and military, amount to £1,388,637, being £65,678 more than the wages of seamen and marines afloat, and this after a peace of thirty-five years! I have had great difficulty in obtaining the lists of promotions and removals, and I trust they are correct; if not, the Admiralty can very easily lay before the House a correct statement, and the country will see how far they have complied with their own regulation.

I remain, your obedient servant,
CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, August 25, 1850.

THE FRENCH NAVY.

To the Editor of the Times.

Sir, The President of the French Republic, the French squadron, and the gigantic works, finished and in progress, which have been seen by many British officers, by the yacht club, and by numerous English gentlemen, together with the articles in the press, have done more to open the eyes of the people of England to our unprotected state, than the celebrated letter of the Duke of Wellington, and the various communications myself and others have made to different members of Her Majesty's Government both publicly and privately, and through the medium of the press. They have seen, almost within sight of our own shores, a splendid breakwater of nearly three miles long rise from the bottom of the sea, sixty feet deep, under which can lie at moorings fifty sail of the line with perfect safety, almost frowning on England. That breakwater, ere long, will be defended by three tremendous fortifications, independent of moveable guns without number, to protect either

entrance that may be attacked. On the Isle of Pelée, opposite the breakwater on the eastern entrance, is Fort Royal (now Fort National), mounting ninety guns casemated, and pointing out of ports like a ship. Opposite this on the main land is Fort de Flamands, mounting many heavy guns: in its rear is the redoubt of Tourlaville.

Opposite the breakwater, to the west, are the Forts of Querqueville, St. Anne, Honet, and one intended to be built on a rock, between the west end of the breakwater and Querqueville. These forts will mount upwards of 150 guns. There are also strong batteries to the left of the basin, bearing on the roads. Within the breakwater, excavated out of rock, and faced with stone, is the *avant port*, capable of containing ten sail of the line alongside the quay, thirty feet deep at low water spring tides. In this port is a dock and four slips; in a line with this, and communicating with it, is an inner basin, in which ten sail of the line can also lie alongside the quay. On two sides of this basin are magazines; and here also lies the sheer hulk. In the rear of Fort Honet there is another small basin, and two building slips. This serves as a ditch to the fort, which is cut off from the main land by a drawbridge; from the lower tier of guns, another bridge conducts you over a ditch to a large barrack-yard, casemated; and two small stairs lead up to the second tier of guns.

In the rear of the *avant port* and the inner basin inland, there is another basin in construction, which communicates with both. This basin when finished can accommodate twenty sail of the line alongside the quay. Here are four docks and five slips. To the left of the great *avant port*, there is another *avant port*, which leads to the steam basin, where there are three slips. The store-houses are large, well arranged, and close to the basins. There is also a port of refuge, leading to another steam basin, where, as in the other basins, the steamers can coal alongside the wharf.

This splendid dockyard is surrounded by a high wall, and the wall is again surrounded by regular fortifications, with a wet ditch; and to protect the works, on the heights in the rear, and, indeed, all round from Tourlaville, there is a double chain of strong redoubts. Independent of all these there is a commercial basin, with gates, in which merchant vessels lie afloat. Two piers project a considerable

distance beyond the gates. Both the town and basin are outside the fortification.

Under this magnificent breakwater lay the French squadron, consisting of two ships of 120 guns, three of 100 guns on two decks, two of ninety guns, and one of ninety-six guns, one frigate of sixty guns; three large steamers of sixteen and twelve guns, but pierced for twenty-eight, and capable of transporting to a short distance upwards of 2000 men each; one screw brig, one corvette, and three smaller steamers.

The ships, as far as we could judge, were in high order, loosed and furled their sails as well as we could do, shifted maintopsail and foresail by signal—the Inflexible, the best of the squadron, in five-and-a-half minutes. They also fired five broadsides with blank cartridge.

In the Friedland, where we were, some of our officers thought they fired slow, but half of her crew had only been on board two months, and this the President took care to explain. The mode of passing the powder was perfect, and well worth copying. Boats were then manned and armed, but not so quickly as I expected. They attacked the steamer, and kept up a good fire; the boats, more numerous than ours, and, except the launches, much larger. This fleet mounts more guns, and, generally speaking, throws a heavier broadside than our ships, with the exception of the Queen. Their crews are also larger; in the Friedland there are 184 men to pass along the powder and shells.

It is commanded by Vice-Admiral Parseval Duchesne, a young-looking man, about sixty; the second in command, Rear-Admiral Dubourdien, about forty-five, has lost a leg. The Captains and officers are young and experienced men, inasmuch as they are almost constantly employed; and it requires more interest for a French officer to get out of employment, than for an English officer to get into it. Promotion is by selection, except to Lieutenants, where one half rise by seniority, and, as far as I could learn, with little favouritism. I am justified in saying, they are commanded and officered by experienced men, for they are almost always afloat; while we, on the other hand, are commanded by men who are employed about once in ten or fifteen years, when little justice is shown in selection for promotion, and not much for employment. The Minister of Marine (an Admiral) was present, and could form his

own opinion of the fleet; whereas, had we had a review at Spithead, our Minister of Marine would have been gaping with his mouth wide open, scarcely knowing the difference between a musket and a great gun.

With us every change of Admiralty brings a change of plan. When Sir James Graham and his Admiralty came into office, they replaced the efficient Flag-ships with inefficient ones. After a while they found it would not answer, and the efficient ships were restored. This lasted till the present Board came into office, and they brought back the inefficient Flag-ships. They are now adopting what I recommended when Sir Charles Wood was Secretary, ten years ago, viz.—to make efficient ships do the duty of the ordinary; and the sooner they do the same thing with the Flag-ships the better; then will you see seven sail of the line ready. Let them take the reliefs, and instead of three years work out of our ships, we shall get five, at about the same expense; and instead of having three ships at home half manned, we shall have two full manned, which will cost the same money. Add to them three more, and you will have a respectable Channel Squadron. Keep half the marines of that squadron on shore, to garrison your sea-ports in peace, and fill their places with sailors; and, in the event of emergency, let each ship send one watch into the flag and ordinary ships; fill them up with officers, seamen, and boys, and you will immediately double your force. Let the duty of labourers and convicts in the dockyards be done by sailors; you would then have a fleet ready for work at a moment's warning; and if this was not enough, call in your coast-guard to fit out another squadron. By that time you would be able to see whether the proclamation would bring the seamen from the merchant service or not.

The affair of Syria ought to have given us a lesson. When the treaty was signed by the allied powers, to reduce the power of Mehemet Ali, France was isolated and offended; the whole nation took fire, and was eager for war. Foreseeing, I suppose, what would happen, they had a reserve squadron at Toulon, and when they recalled their fleet from the Levant, I think they mustered twenty sail of the line. During the operations in Syria we never had more than twelve. The Vanguard was commissioned on the 2nd of April, 1840, and, I think, arrived off Alexandria in October; the Rodney was commissioned on the 13th of May, and did not arrive

till after Acre was taken; the Calcutta was commissioned on the 22nd of August, 1840, and, I think, arrived at Marmorice at the end of November. The menaces of France frightened us, and on the 1st of October the Britannia and Howe were taken from the Port-Admirals, the Donegal was ordered from Lisbon, and I believe the Bellisle's men were drafted to man them. But, notwithstanding all this, they did not arrive at Marmorice till the beginning of January, after the treaty was signed with Mehemet Ali. The Impregnable, another flag-ship, was commissioned on the 27th of October, and the Monarch on the 30th, and lay eight months waiting for men; so that, while the operations were going on on the coast of Syria, we had only twelve sail of the line, and they undermanned, scattered from Alexandria to Scandaroon, two on the passage out, and three fitting in England; while France had twenty sail of the line in Toulon watching events. What they had in other ports I do not know.

In this state of things, France had three courses before her—the first, to have raised the blockade of Alexandria, and brought out the Turco-Egyptian fleet, of upwards of twenty sail, to have endeavoured to cut us up in detail, or, at all events, have driven us from off the coast, and then proceeded to England or Ireland. This, I believe, was Admiral Lalande's plan. Their second course was more sure and more simple, viz.—to give out at Paris that the Toulon fleet was ordered to Gibraltar and Cherbourg, and was to sail on a fixed day. We should have got alarmed, and Sir Robert Stopford would have been unquestionably ordered home, or he would have sailed the moment he got information of the sailing of the French fleet. When the coast was clear, Mehemet Ali would have sent his fleet to the coast of Syria, and made prisoners of all the Turks, and thus France would have outwitted the allies and gained her point, and without going to war. Why this was not done I don't know. The third course was to have kept every thing secret, ordered all her steamers to collect on a given day at Cherbourg, and gone there themselves, taking care to have had steamers at Gibraltar, to have them towed through the Gut. This would have given them, at least, five or six weeks the start of Stopford; and I will ask any unprejudiced man, what could have prevented, them from bringing over any number of troops, and inflicting on us a most severe chastisement? There would have been no breach of

faith nor dishonour in this; France had a cause of war—the people were all anxious for it: Louis Phillippe had not nerve for such a dash, and England was saved from dishonour and disgrace.

This was not the only event France was prepared for. She had assembled from foreign stations from twenty-five to thirty men-of-war (some of which were double banked frigates) in the West Indies, before we had the least idea she had one there, and the order was only necessary to secure the whole of our West India islands. Fortunately we escaped, and France lost the finest opportunity she ever had of taking a full revenge on England for all the disasters she met with last war.

One would have supposed such an escape would have been a lesson—not a bit of it. Sir Robert Peel gradually paid off the fleet, and when the Tahiti affair took place we had only one line-of-battle ship in the Mediterranean, and, by accident, the flag-ship at Spithead going to the Pacific. We got out of the scrape, and I believe the indemnity to Mr. Pritchard is not paid to this day. Again, when France and Russia joined in the affair of Greece, and the French Ambassador left this country, and the Russian was ready to leave it, we had not one full-manned ship in England.

Napoleon said Cherbourg was an eye to see and an arm to strike. We had better take care, or some day it will strike with a vengeance. We have Russia on our left flank, with a large fleet in the Baltic, and France with a harbour capable of holding a large fleet in our front, waiting only a railroad from Paris to make it complete. Should these two powers at any time fall out with us, I do not think they will pay much attention to Cobden's Peace Congress. One wants to go to Constantinople, the other wants to go to the Rhine, and we want to prevent both; and when the pear is riper, Cobden's preaching at Frankfort will not prevent them.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun, October 1, 1850.

To the Editor of the Morning Herald.

Mr. Editor, I am glad you have at last found a correspondent, under the signature of "W." who, although he disagrees

with me, writes like a gentleman, and I shall reply to him. "W." defies me to prove, before impartial and competent judges, that France, America, and Russia, combined, can produce line-of-battle ships, frigates, and steamers, equal to ours. He knows very well that it is impossible to bring them together before impartial and competent witnesses; therefore his challenge is useless

He admits that we have some bad and indifferent ships, and adds that they have none equal to our best, and that those of this class comprise a vast proportion of our Navy. I will meet him on this point. Of three-deckers, we have the Queen, admitted to be an excellent ship; we have the St. George and Neptune, one foot wider than the St. Vincent, but never tried; the Caledonia, once a good ship, but altered into a bad one at the cost of £90,000; the Trafalgar, a good ship, but indifferent sailer; the St. Vincent, Britannia, Howe, Queen Charlotte, Hibernia, Camperdown, Royal Adelaide, Nelson, Impregnable, Princess Charlotte—not one of which can stand up under canvass; and the St. Vincent is now having her poop removed, and the upper-deck guns taken away; and the same must be done with the others, before they are good for anything. The Admiralty are so sensible of this, that they are building new three-deckers as fast as they can, which would have been unnecessary, had the ships I have mentioned been good. The Prince Regent was another of that class, reduced to a two-decker for the same reason. As for two-deckers, he does not seem to know that our best ships—I believe eight in number, are copied from the French Canopus, and had our four 92-gun ships been after the same model, they would have been much finer ships than they are. Three were built by Seppings—good ships; the Rodney alone has been to sea, and sails indifferently, and the Albion rolls to such a degree, that the plan has been abandoned. Next to them we have the Cambridge and Indus, built, I believe, after the Christian VII; the Bellerophon, Foudroyant, Kent, Achille, and all that class, and not bad ships. It is no use mentioning the small seventy-fours, as they are not fit to go into the line; and as to the fleet built by the late Surveyor, they roll to such a degree that they are not considered good men-of-war, and we have discontinued building them. I think the above is a sufficient answer to "W." as far as line-of-battle ships go. I am not prepared to prove whether the French, in proportion, have committed more blunders than we have.

I believe they have only twenty-four sail in the water; the rest they wisely keep on the stocks, and I am glad to find we are following their example.

Had we brought our Mediterranean fleet to Spithead, "W." would have seen that the French fleet at Cherbourg mounted more guns, carried heavier metal, and had more men than ours, with the exception of the Queen, who carries sixty-eight pounders on the lower-deck; and if he had gone to Cherbourg, he would not have looked in vain to find beauty of form, capacity of fighting-deck, and internal order and discipline, for I promise him he would there have viewed it to his heart's content.

For drawing attention to these facts, I have been accused of "fouling my own nest." It is not so. I have done it to warn the Government, in order that "our nest should not be fouled;" and when my letters since the year 1816, to different administrations, are published, which will be shortly, it will be seen that both publicly and privately I have laboured to correct the abuses in the Navy. It is unnecessary to go through our list of frigates; for we have got rid of almost all the old ones, many of which never ought to have been built, and are following the example of the French, in building large ones to take the place of the small 74's.

Now, as to steamers, "W." says, "I have my particular notions "and theories, as to what is the best construction and future use of "war steamers, but the rest of the Navy disagree with me. That "I was allowed to build a steamer (which he admits to be a fine "vessel), that I gave her a main-deck battery of guns produced at "the cost of a large line-of-battle ship, a steamer, with the armament of a small frigate, a crew in proportion, and all the vulnerable disadvantages belonging to paddle-steamers. And this is the "principal hobby Sir Charles delights to ride, in his repeated "charges against the Admiralty. And though some portion of the "press echo his reasoning, I feel convinced there is no naval officer "but himself would wish to see such another paddle-steamer built to "carry a main-deck battery."

Why, Sir, "W." must have been asleep, or he would have known that the Terrible was built before the Sidon, to carry a main-deck battery; and a fine steamer she would have been, had they not forgotten to give her proper bow and stern ports on the main-deck, and

had they built her deep enough to house her engine, and carry coals equal to her power.

Does he not know, that since the Sidon was launched the large engines have been taken out of the Retribution, to enable her to carry main-deck guns? and had they not committed the same fault in not giving her stern-ports on the main-deck, a good steamer she would have been. Does he not know, that the Odin, Furious, Magician, and Tiger, were all launched since the Sidon, and have main-deck batteries; and had they been built after the Sidon, would have had clear decks, fore and aft? and does he not know that we have another on the stocks, of the same class? and does he not know that the Leopard will be shortly launched, with a new deck fore and aft, and a battery? and had she been one foot and a-half deeper, as I recommended, she would have been the first paddle-steamer in the world, and carried more coals than the Sidon.

The French steamers are certainly inferior to the Terrible, Retribution, Sidon, and Leopard; but they are much superior to the others, and would carry a greater number of troops, which is their object, and which is our danger. Our steam corvettes, in which I include the Dragon class, are superior to the French, but carry very few troops. The Sidon would carry as many as two of them. Now as to our screw steam frigates:—the Termagant, after pottering with her three or four years, is a failure, inasmuch as she only carries three or four days' coal, and is obliged to mess and sleep her crew on the gun-deck, and she does not throw so heavy a broadside as the Sidon. The Dauntless has been lengthened, and only mounts twenty-four guns, of inferior calibre to the Sidon, carries 360 tons of coals, is obliged to berth her marines on the gun-deck, and if she carried the guns she ought to do, would have half her ship's company there, which would make her quite unfit to watch an enemy's port. The Arrogant has an auxiliary screw only, and is a very good ship for general purposes. The four cut-down seventy-fours are very useful vessels, but have not speed to contend with paddles, nor ought they to have it. What we want, is a greater number of large paddle steamers.

"W." passes over very slightly the unpardonable mistake and dreadful waste of money in building the iron steamers. I wonder if he knows "Beta," who wrote some time ago in the

Morning Chronicle, and who had some hand in building those vessels.

I remain, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

18, Albemarle Street, October 14, 1850.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, The First Lord of the Admiralty, in his examination before the Committee on Salaries, told them he had been a Lord of the Treasury, Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was now First Lord of the Admiralty. This, it must be allowed, is tolerably quick promotion in seventeen years, five or six of which his party were out of office.

The Committee give, as a reason for the chief officers of state having large salaries, their great talent and experience. I never heard the present First Lord of the Admiralty celebrated as a great financier, and I am quite certain he had no knowledge of naval affairs. He appears a very unwilling witness, and certainly made the most of the duties of the Admiralty; but I think I shall be able to show, that there is not the least necessity for so numerous a Board, though there is a great necessity for the whole concern being under one roof; and that habitations may be easily found close enough to the Admiralty to enable them to be at all calls; and had other evidence been called, they would have been told so.

In answer to question 2703, the business seems to be divided amongst the different Lords as follows:—

"First Lord.—Navy estimates and finance, political affairs, slave trade, dockyard works, patronage, and general control.

"First Sea Lord.—Foreign navies, composition and disposition of the fleet, sailing orders, general regulations, fisheries, steam reserve, advance squadron, appointment of lieutenants, masters, pursers, mates, midshipmen, and naval cadets (that is, not the appointment, but the disposition of them), and second masters, masters' assistants, clerks and clerks' assistants, boatswains, gunners, and so forth.

"Second Sea Lord.—Superintends the department of the Sur-

veyor of the Navy and Steam, including ship-building, steam machinery, repairs, defects, armaments, inventions, &c.

" Third Sea Lord.—The discipline of the fleet, punishment returns, courts-martial, marines, marine-artillery, coast guard, rendezvous, manning the fleet and complements, boys and naval apprentices, the Excellent and gunnery, the dock-yard battalion, and the hydrographical department.

" Fourth Sea Lord.—Department of the Storekeeper-General, Controller of Victualling and Medical Director General, stores, Greenwich pensioners, civil pensions, pay and passages, miscellaneous cases, appointment of medical officers, foreign yards.

" The Civil Lord.—Department of the Accountant-General, packet service, civil affairs of Greenwich Hospital, dockyard schools, education, seamen's libraries, chaplains, naval instructors, post office, and religious instruction."

The public has now before them the division of labour, and they have a right to fix individual responsibility on each of the Lords. The First Lord in his distribution of patronage will not now be able to throw it upon the Admiralty, but must be responsible for every appointment he makes, whether good or bad, and he will be closely watched, as will be the other Lords, in the management of their departments; their work upon paper appears very heavy, but they make work for themselves, and, as Mr. Fitzroy (a late Lord) said in the House, it is not half done, and twenty years' experience has shown that it is badly done, and that there has been more blunders, more waste, and more extravagance than there was when the Navy Board, Victualling Board, Medical Board, &c. existed; and what Sir G. Cockburn, Sir G. Clerk, and Sir Byam Martin foresaw has taken place, viz. that there would be a great want of responsibility.

I will simplify all this evidence, and show that there might be a much better division of labour, complete responsibility at less expense, and that the duties are not so arduous as stated by the First Lord. I know it is extremely difficult to get great changes introduced into the Navy, so I will adhere as much as possible, to the present arrangement.

I shall begin by abolishing the Admiralty as a political board, and appoint an Admiral, with the title of Commander-in-Chief, Admiral of Great Britain, or whatever title the Minister chooses to give him, for that does not signify.

He should have the whole of the patronage, and be responsible for its proper distribution—the composition, manning, distribution, and discipline of the fleet, marine, and marine artillery; I leave out the foreign navies, "which is a humbug," and all the other duties stated by Sir Francis Baring to swell the duties, as they are all included in what I have stated above. He should be assisted by a Captain of the fleet, Adjutant-general of Marines, a secretary and a private secretary, and as many clerks as needful to carry on the correspondence of the fleet.

The sinecures of Vice and Rear-Admirals should be abolished, and the second in command for the time being should be the Vice-Admiral.

He should have the Surveyor's and Storekeeper's department, which includes ship-building, steam machinery, defects, repairs, dockyard battalions and schools, inventions, and, in point of fact, everything belonging to the dockyard establishments both at home and abroad; contracts relative to the dockyards should be made and signed by him, the Surveyor and the Storekeeper. He should be held responsible for the management of this department; all the patronage, except what was in the hands of the superintendents, should be vested in him; he should correspond with the superintendents, and of course be amenable to the Commander-in-Chief.

The Rear-Admiral should superintend the victualling and medical department, in which is included contracts belonging to that department, to be made and signed by him, the medical director and controller of victualling, transports, convict ships, hospitals, and victualling-yards. The patronage should be vested in him, as it is in the Vice-Admiral, and he should be held responsible, correspond with the superintendent, and be amenable to the Commander-in-Chief.

The Accountant-General is a high office, and one of great trust. It cannot be filled by a more proper man than it is at present, and he should be held entirely responsible; it would be also under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief. The military part of Greenwich Hospital should be entrusted to the Governor, who should examine the men for admission, assisted by the Lieutenant-Governor, and manage the patronage of his department. The civil part should be entirely under the commissioners, one of whom should have a seat in Parliament.

The packets and post-office contracts, &c., should return to the

Postmaster-General, and the Navy should have nothing to do with them whatever.

The coast-guard has a Controller, and he has the Custom House for his master; and they had much better be allowed to look after their own affairs.

I have now provided for the management of the Navy, with the exception of the Hydrographer's-office, which is "another humbug," and may be superintended by the chief. As to politics, as we have three Secretaries of State and a Prime Minister, I cannot see what the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy has to do with them. The Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State can send for him when they please, and give directions when the Navy is required to forward their views; and, in point of fact, this is always done, and their orders are forwarded to the Admirals on the different stations, to carry them into execution; and this ought to be the especial business of one of the Secretaries of the Admiralty, who, with the chief, should alone be cognizable of what passes, instead of its being known to half the clerks of the Admiralty. The chief as well as the Secretary should sit in Parliament, and one or other bring forward the estimates.

I now come to the offices—one at Whitehall and the other at Somerset House, and to their Lordships' houses, two of which the Committee have recommended to be given up.

In question 2,751, Mr. Bright gives the First Lord a home thrust, on the propriety of bringing all the business under one roof.

Sir Francis admits the business would be better done, and that an exchange is contemplated, which will bring the more essential part of the business closer to him; but he does not think it could be conducted with a smaller staff, except the reduction of messengers. How little Sir Francis must know of the constant communication going on between the Admiralty and Somerset House, when he gives such evidence! I have shown in a former letter how the business is transacted, and I have no hesitation in stating, that if the whole establishment was under one roof, and if the heads of the different departments were allowed to attend to their own business, and if the Commanders-in-Chief, on all the different stations, were not obliged to send to the Admiralty returns, and write letters on every trifle belonging to their squadrons, you would get rid of one-half of the Admiralty establishment; and I

verily believe, the useless returns and correspondence required by the Admiralty (though it may give them patronage), greatly embarrasses and retards the service. Now, Sir, I should recommend, that all the houses in the Admiralty should be turned into public offices, and if that, together with the contemplated exchange, be not sufficient, there is a garden belonging to the Admiralty, in the Spring Garden Passage, which might be built on, and, if that was not sufficient, one wing of the Admiralty might be carried into the garden, which is large enough for all purposes, and the Commander-in-Chief and Secretary could be very well accommodated in Whitehall-place, directly opposite the Admiralty. The Ordnance office at this moment is being enlarged on account of the inconvenience of sending to the Tower for papers, and it is much easier to enlarge the Admiralty.

I now come to the expense of the establishment. The salaries of the Lords, the principal officers, and the two secretaries, amount to £19,500 a-year, as follows:—

First Lord	£4500
Four Lords	4000 and pay
One Lord	1000
Houses for three	600
Two Secretaries	3500
Private Secretary	300
Surveyor	1000
Accountant-General	1000
Medical Director	1000
Storekeeper-General	1000
Controller of Victualling	1000
Houses	600
	£19,500

The arrangement I propose would be as follows:—

Commander-in-Chief	£2000
Vice-Admiral	1000
Rear-Admiral	1000
Captain of the Fleet	1000
First Secretary	1500
Carried forward	£6500

Brought forward	£6500
Second Secretary	1000
Private Secretary	300
Surveyor	1000
Accountant-General	1000
Medical Director	1000
Controller of Victualling	1000
Storekeeper-General	1000
Two houses	600
	£13,400

Showing a reduction of £6,100 a-year, and I am quite certain the work would be much better done; every man would be responsible for his own department; there would be no building ships and pulling them to pieces—no destroying, breaking up, and altering as fast as we built; no building thirty-three iron steamers without trying one, at the cost of a million; at all events we should be able to fix the responsibility and punish the culprit. At present we could not put our finger on him, unless Sir George Cockburn should unfortunately die, and he would then be saddled with the whole affair. If the public do not now insist on a change they had better hold their tongues: they have grumbled a little at the expense of the iron steamers, but they may rest assured the reign of blunder is not over, and never will be, as long as the present system continues.

I am, your obedient servant,

CHARLES NAPIER.

Merchistoun Hall, Nov. 20, 1850.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THE Reader will observe, that the foregoing letters have been written at different times, beginning in 1816. I have many others on naval subjects, but I made a selection of what appeared to me bearing on the letters lately published in "the Times." Every naval officer knows full well how difficult it is to move the Admiralty, and men who have sat at the Board, and sit there now, are well aware of it.

The First Lord being a civilian, knows nothing of the service, and the Second Lord is always trying to be Captain of the Ship, and to treat the Junior Lords as his Lieutenants. Sir George Cockburn was tolerably successful in this.

He was of opinion that the Board should be chiefly composed of Admirals. His successor thought he could manage Captains better, and for some time he was the only Admiral there. Promotion has placed a second, and I think, if he was more attended to, things would go on better. It is no use a junior Lord appealing to the First Lord; he naturally enough leans to the senior, and the Captains as naturally take the same course.

Should the plan I have proposed be adopted, the chief would command, and would be obeyed, and he would consult the heads of departments without causing jealousies.

That some such plan as I have proposed will be ultimately adopted, I have not the smallest doubt. People are beginning to open their eyes, and when the renewal of the income-tax comes

before Parliament, they must bring with it reduction of expenditure.

In the foot-notes it will be seen some of my recommendations have been attended to, but there remains much to be done. The appointment of youngsters, first seized upon by the Tories, was restored by the Whigs, but shortly after reverted to the Admiralty, where it will remain to be jobbed away for party purposes. It is quite clear Captains will not take the same pains with the youngsters as formerly, when they were brought into the service by them; hence a melancholy falling off in the seamanship of young officers. Lately, the examinations have become more strict, and Lord Auckland would not promote a Mate unless recommended by his Captain: whether the same system is followed by his successor I do not know.

A bill has been passed for improving the Mercantile Marine, which I trust will do good; but no step has been taken for rapidly manning the Navy, in the event of a sudden war.

The question is—can the French and Russians send a fleet to sea before Great Britain? As to Russia, there cannot be a doubt of it; she keeps up a large fleet of from forty to fifty sail-of-the-line in the Baltic and Black Sea; one is ready to act against Turkey, and the other against Great Britain; and when the Baltic is open, she can bring that fleet on our coast when she pleases. We have no defences on the eastern coast whatever, and the capital of Scotland, with a clear sea, is entirely exposed, and may be laid under contribution at any time, and be followed by the sacking of Glasgow. London is better defended by the difficulties of the navigation, but by nothing else.

As to France, the Syrian war proved that she could man a fleet, as far as twenty sail of the line, sooner than Great Britain. Our ships lay at Spithead for months, waiting for men; and the Government could not even try the effect of Sir James Graham's

proclamation and double bounty, without paying half a million of money to the seamen in commission, which is quite unnecessary, and that part of the Act ought to be repealed.

I have shown what France could have done, had she been so disposed; and most certainly should a similar opportunity offer, she will not let it slip. Ministers may try and bamboozle the people of England if they please, and tell them, as Lord Grey did Lord Ellenborough, that they are quite safe; but they know the contrary themselves, and there is not a naval or military man in the Three Kingdoms, whose opinion is worth a jot, that is not as well aware of it as I am.

France, on the breaking out of war, has no cause of alarm from England; we have no army to attack her; and, besides, all her arsenals are impregnable, and one is nearly finished under our nose much more formidable than the works of Dunkirk, which we made such a fuss about destroying. We have seen a fleet assembled there to be reviewed by the President, where it remained long after the review, and has since been sailing about the coast of England, and twice anchored in Torbay, and there was not a gun on the whole coast to return a salute*.

We have great reason to be afraid of France, because she possesses a large disposable army, and our arsenals are comparatively undefended—London entirely so, and we have no sufficient naval force at home. Of ships (with the exception of steamers) we have enough; but what is the use of them without men? They are only barracks, and are of no more use for defence than if we were to build batteries all over the country without soldiers to put into them.

It has been said, if we are to keep up a large force in time of peace we had better be at war. I do not wish to see a large

* Had this happened when the French Ambassador left this country, what a pretty state of confusion we should have been in?

force kept up, but I wish to see the money voted for the Navy judiciously employed. I have shown that it has been shamefully, extravagantly, and wastefully expended; and as long as the Navy is governed as it is, the waste will continue. I am willing to admit we are in a safer state than we were last year; we have three steam line-of-battle ships in commission, such as they are; they ought to be kept in reserve; we have also four or five screw frigates, which ought also to be in reserve, *when well tried;* our force of paddle steamers is also more respectable, and we are making fewer mistakes; we have now ten carrying main-deck broadsides, notwithstanding the abuse that was heaped upon me for recommending it.

The ordinary guard ships are now efficient ships, and it is to be hoped the flag ships will follow; this will give us a reserve of seven sail of the line. The next step I trust will be to land half the marines from the advanced ships, and fill them up with seamen; this, with the Lisbon squadron, will give us a Channel Fleet of four sail-of-the-line: should any thing suddenly happen, half the crew turned over to the reserve, and filled up with officers, boys and marines, would give us eleven sail-of-the-line; and if the labourers and convicts in the dockyards were replaced by seamen, they would go a great way in manning them: with this we could act on the defensive till we collected the coast guard; and the seamen, it is to be hoped, would come forward on the Queen's Proclamation being issued. In addition to this, let the Government seriously turn their attention to forming a systematic plan of manning the Navy; if they do not approve of the Bill I brought forward, let them get a better. Garrison all our sea-port towns with marines, and as they embark in war, call the militia out to take their place. Let them meet the additional expense, by economy in the dockyards; when the next estimates come forward, limit the money to be expended there. I want no addition to the

estimates, and I am sure means will be found to do what I propose. We will not be able, it is true, to have so much building, breaking up, and altering—we will not be able to throw away another million in iron steamers—and we will not be able to burden the list with useless promotions; but we will be able to keep up an efficient service*. Till something is done, the country will never be satisfied; and what is of more consequence, the country never will be safe.

* I understand Sir Francis Baring has decided to decrease the Captains' list; he deserves great credit for this, and I trust he will go on.

THE END.

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